SEP 17 1965

The North American Review

Arthur Hoppe: Newspaper Satirist

Sanctuary

A Spanish Parable

The Sisters

The Dark Chance

Fiction, Poetry, Departments, and Reviews

Volume 250, No. 4 *September, 1965* *$1.00*

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Contributors

TURNER CASSITY's poem is one of a series "in pop art." Mr. Cassity has other poems incorporating Tarzan, Baby Jane, and Terry and the Pirates. Other new work by Mr. Cassity, who lives in Atlanta, can be found in *Poetry* and *Kenyon Review*.

ALBERT DRAKE breathes academic air at Eugene, Oregon.

ROSALYN GEBHART writes and lives in New York City.

R. GODDARD is Amusements Editor of the St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*.

PATRICIA GOEDICKE lives on a hill in Athens, where she helps her husband raise pepper plants, grapefruits and patient Lucy's. She has published in numerous literary magazines.

From Chicago, WILLIAM HUNT has published in *Big Table, Chicago, Choice, Epoch, Poetry Northwest* and others.

Now a New Yorker, DAVID IGNATOW has two recent volumes of poetry published by Wesleyan University Press, and is currently enjoying a year as a Guggenheim Fellow. He has appeared in NAR before.

DONALD JUSTICE is the author of *The Summer Anniversaries* and *A Local Storm*. He teaches at the University of Iowa, from which he was absent the past year while on a Ford Fellowship.

Spring of the Thief is JOHN LOGAN'S latest book of poetry. He teaches at San Francisco State as he prepares his fourth collection.

DAVID O. RANKIN continues work in Boston toward his D.D.

REX B. ROSS III says only that he "is a tiny pinch of salt in the wondrous wounds of the world."

From down under comes the story *Sanctuary* by DAL STIVENS, a fifth generation Australian who lives in Sydney with his wife and two children. From 1949 to 1957 he lived in London. He has published five collections of short stories, had stories in more than fifty anthologies, and is an amateur naturalist with articles in leading natural history journals in the US, UK and Germany. In 1963-64 Stivens was president of the Australian Society of Authors.

MARK STRAND is a Fulbright Lecturer in Brazil. His first book, *Sleeping With One Eye Open*, was published in 1965 by The Stone Wall Press in Iowa City.

CLAE WALTHAM'S stories have appeared in *Seventeen* and SEP, her articles in various publications. She is currently working on a "long-short story" to be published "in the near future" in *Redbook*.

BURTON H. WOLFE is a freelance writer living in Chevy Chase, Maryland. At one time he was editor and publisher of *The Californian* which changed its name to *The American Liberal* before its lamented death. His articles have appeared in *Harper's, Coronet, Monocle,* and many other magazines.

CHARLES WRIGHT has published both prose and poetry in previous issues of NAR. He has just returned from the Fulbright part of Italy to begin teaching and studying at the University of Iowa.

Reviewers: MARY BYERLY, A. FARREL BORENSTEIN, WILLIAM A. STOPPEL, MADGE KISTNER, WALTER BORENSTEIN, BERNARD E. RICHARDSON and ARMARIUS.

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ANARCHIST'S DICTIONARY

One of the great pastimes of modern psychiatrists is their endeavor to discover the hidden motivations of revolutionary politics. Thus, the experts conclude that Karl Marx suffered from carbuncles, Thomas Paine from the recognition of his illegitimacy, Oscar Wilde from homosexuality, Rousseau from syphilis, and Jesus Christ from only God knows what.

It may interest the readers of the *Anarchist's Dictionary* to know that the author has enjoyed a normal life. My childhood was non-traumatic and my health is unimpaired. At the age of twelve I successfully resisted the advances of the scoutmaster, and more recently of a government psychiatrist. I am in principle opposed to houses of prostitution due to their capitalistic orientation and I have developed excellent bladder control so as to avoid seamy toilets. The only scars that could possibly bear psychological significance are a result of having caught my head in the doors of a Greyhound bus and having been dragged several blocks to the next stop. The driver later apologized and thanked heaven he was not on the Miami run. Perhaps my capacity for understanding and forgiveness is best illustrated here, for I continue to ride buses, though in a different manner.

The family relationship was also normal. Unlike Freud, who distrusted his father, or Schopenhauer, who despised his mother, my attitude has been one of constant and reciprocated love. Although my grandfather was a Coolidge Republican, my father a New Deal Democrat, and my mother a Goldwater Conservative, the family has never been known for political sagacity. As a youth, I preferred grandfather's politics, but that may have been the result of my having been the recipient of his discarded Roosevelt dimes. In all events, the political atmosphere at home was quite varied and never oppressive. I was encouraged to form my own mistaken opinions, and I did.

I have always hoped to number myself among those radicals and revolutionists who were not afraid openly to voice their skepticism of themselves and of the main tenets of their religion. The fact that I cannot discover a hidden motivation for my radical politics does not prove its absence. There is the solace of having passed the CIA examinations, but alas, they too have been known to err. I therefore conclude that I am as normal as the next man, and that in these times is cause for concern.

The choice of anarchism over the more popular philosophies was a process of elimination. The conservatives were vain and rather ignorant. The liberals were naive and rather dull. The socialists were verbose and the communists without humor. In college I was attracted to the vegetarians, until I was bitten by a cow and decided on revenge. My Christian friends made an earnest effort to convert me to their ranks, but without success. While St. Peter was undoubtedly attracted to the purity of Christ's character, my spiritual leader ran off with the organist.

The other multitudinous world redeeming organizations did not welcome me. The American Legion appeared envious of my draft-dodging. The Free Lovers were concerned with my happy marriage. The Natural Childbirth crowd rejected my adopted son. The Black Muslims demanded a blood transfusion. The Klansmen wet their sheets when informed of my preference for brown eggs. Rejection followed rejection, until I feared the world would be redeemed without me.

I was introduced to anarchism while a graduate student at the University of Idaho. I attended several meetings where no one appeared. There were no dues. There was no literature—no leader—no program. The most memorable affair was the national convention, that year held in Potlatch, Idaho. The keynote speaker set the tone of the convention when he announced his refusal to attend. Only one delegate appeared and we later learned that he had confused the dates. No candidate was endorsed and no expenses incurred. We deemed it the most successful event since Bakunin missed the Polish Insurrection. In this way, my anarchist sympathies were formed.

Several of my friends were worried that I might alter my peaceful disposition to become a dagger-carrying, bomb-throwing fiend. In actual fact, I have detested violence since the age of six when my nose was broken by a drunken marine. Besides, the gentle art of assassination is best left to a Higher Power, who has wisely limited our span of errors to three-score and ten. Thoreau, Tolstoy, Kropotkin, Godwin, and most other anarchists adhere to this view. The Democrats and Republicans may soon come around.

"The pen is mightier than the sword!" This is a saying as famous as "Remember the Maine!" or "We will walk to Cedar Rapids, if necessary!" The great truth contained therein is the guiding principle of the *Anarchist's Dictionary*. I will fight my enemies with ink like the giant squid. I will unmask their duplicity and drive them from the land. I will create a new language for mutual understanding. I will redeem the world of its iniquities and bring it to salvation. And lastly, I will prove that all men are rogues, including myself.

Hollywood—America's play-gland.

Communism—The philosophy of immaculate deception.

Virgin—See Opportunities, lack of.

DAVID O. RANKIN

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The North American Review

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PEELING CRAYONS

Demands on time and attention are incessant. One of the most frequently heard responses is, "Later. I'm too busy right now." That is such a convenient and impressive delaying tactic. People respond without even thinking, "I'm too busy right now."

When my younger son was a pre-schooler, a call to lunch brought from him the reply, "I'm too busy right now." Finally located in the corner of his room with his back to the door, it was impossible to see what detained him.

"Come to lunch."
"Can't now."
"Why not?"
"I'm too busy."
"Doing what?"
"Peeling crayons, of course."

He was methodically skinning the labels off each of a Giant Box of Crayolas as if his continued life depended upon an uninterrupted completion of the task.

Once identified, crayon peelers materialized everywhere. The whole world is populated with people engaged in pointless busy work. The busy work ploy is learned early and begins to flourish in the very young. Upon reaching adulthood, most people have refined the skill to a fine art. Peeling crayons becomes vocation and avocation. For many, life never achieves a level exceeding that of my pre-school crayon peeler.

Of course, different names are applied to different approaches, variations of the crayon peeling technique; however, the appearance of a crayon peeler by any name remains the same—hard-pressed, skillful, highly-trained technicians intently pursuing *meaningful* tasks, all "too busy right now" to take time out for lunch, to cultivate friendship, to question the value of their actions, or to relate their busy work to the frightening reality of the world about them.

Some collect pennies or stamps or first editions.
Some collect or paint mysterious art works.
Some devote lifetimes to the moot point of whether it is a comma or a fly speck after a certain line in a poem by a long-dead writer.
Some contemplate their navels.
Some contemplate others' navels or breasts or buttocks.
While the Navaho slowly starve to death.
Some manipulate legislators.
Some legislate.
Some attend the Coliseum.
While Rome burns.
Some wash automobiles.
Some water lawns.
While the water shortage explodes to terrifying dimensions.
Others pursue profits.
Others devise bigger bombs.
While the UN stagnates on the polluted Hudson.
Some manufacture lies about others.
Others manufacture lies about some.
Some manufacture lies about themselves.
While truth stands lost and naked in the smog-bound streets.

Is it a comma or a fly speck? Must all continue peeling crayons while the minutes tick away and the trigger is being set on the time bomb which is the world? Personally, I'll have to think about it later. I am too busy right now.

PKF

In Volume 250 Number One (Spring, 1965), *The North American Review* published that excellent short story LOW BLUE MAN by

GORDON A. WEAVER
111 Old Loudon Road
Latham, New York.

Without Mr. Weaver's knowledge or his permission, we changed his name to George. Although Mr. Gordon A. Weaver has been pleasantly quiet about this, we assume that there is a vague possibility his silence may indicate pique. Mr. GORDON A. WEAVER, we apologize.

The Editors

In Vol. 250 #3 (July, 1965), of *The North American Review,* the poem, *I Have Merged, Like the Bird, With the Bright Air,* was published without a byline; however, it was not slipped under the editor's door by an anonymous poet. It was created by Roger Weaver

2443½ Willamette
Eugene, Oregon

We apologize to ROGER WEAVER and his readers.

The Editors

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LETTERS NEVER MAILED DEPARTMENT

Arkansaw, Wisconsin
September 1, 1965

Mr. Barney Rosset
Publisher and Editor
Grove Press, Inc.
64 University Place
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Rosset:

The following is quoted from a publicity sheet sent out by Grove Press with an August 25th release date.

"Ten of the most distinctive, individual, and influential American writers . . ." the release continues and then includes among that sacred ten "William Burroughs tells here how he uses his famous 'cut up method' in which pages of text are cut out and rearranged to form new combinations and his 'fold in method' in which a page of text—'my own or someone else's'—is folded down the middle and placed on another page, with the composite text then read across half one text and half the other."

Unless you, Mr. Rosset, are a most sardonic practical joker, this blurb answers the question as to what has happened to at least part of contemporary American writers. And publishers. They are writing and publishing by and for schizoids.

Say that it is only your morbid jest.

Sincerely,
Diogenes Jones

OUT, DAMNED BARTLETT!

Frankly, there for a while I was beginning to wonder if I'd ever make it as a writer at all. The trouble was that I spoke with many voices. It was not that I loved my talent less, but I loved old Bartlett more. Ay, there's the rub. Rather than realizing that individuality is the salt of common life, I played the sedulous ape to many masters.

Fortunately, better late than never, I saw the error of my ways. Now I am my own man, knowing full well that the art of writing is the art of applying the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair and that he that goes a borrowing goes a sorrowing.

Once but a gatherer and disposer of other men's stuff, I wrapped myself in quotations as a beggar would enfold himself in the purple of emperors. Whatever gods may be, mine was Bartlett, little knowing at the time that to observations which ourselves we make, we grow more partial for the observer's sake. Verily, I had a tiger by the tail, laughing scornfully at friends who urged me to avoid all citations from poets, for to quote them argues feeble industry.

As it turns out now, I thank them heartily for their advice. Although many receive advice, few profit by it. But not I. I went and sinned no more. A little quoting, in truth, can be a dangerous thing, and enough is equal to a feast.

By necessity, by proclivity, and by delight we all quote. But a quotation, like a pun, should come unsought, and then be welcome only for some propriety or felicity justifying the intrusion.

Of course, all wise men will agree that those who never quote in return are seldom quoted. But I was making it too much of a good thing—like some who for renown, on scraps of learning dote, and think they grow immortal as they quote.

Nevermore, nevermore! In writing, as in everything, I have discovered that the best place to find a helping hand is at the end of my arm. There is no easy way out, for toil is the sire of fame, and who casts to write a living line, must sweat. After all, Rome wasn't built in a day.

Once that sincerest form of flatterer, an imitator, not ever likely to whiff the sweet smell of success, I say to all aspiring scribblers here and now: To thine ownself be true. I hate quotations. Tell me what you know.

And never for a moment believe that there is no bore we dread being left alone with so much as our own minds. To the contrary, there are few brains that would not be better for living on their own fat a little while.

As for Bartlett, for such kind of learning as this, if it be not bettered by the borrowers, among good authors is accounted Plagiare.

All bad things, like good things, of necessity coming to an end, I say to Bartlett: Get thee to a nunnery: with your wits, your bards and your storytellers. Out of sight, say I, out of mind. I hear their gentle voices calling, but I shall not look upon their like again.

In conclusion, if I may be permitted one small quote, the foregoing may have been an ill-favored thing, sir, but it was mine own. Actually, I couldn't have said that better myself. So all's well that ends well.

Robert Goddard
Globe-Democrat
St. Louis, Missouri

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REVELATION, REMINISCENCE, AND THE EVER-HOLY SELF

When I returned to Long Island after many years—a period marked by Depression, War II, and Inflation—I found extreme changes. Here and there was an old landmark I recognized, that is true. But it was also true that there was nothing left to recognize.

I drove around Douglaston trying to rid myself of a sense of disorientation. After all, this wasn't merely the place where I was born: here I lived for years, and here I had forged an intimacy with the land that should have told me every spot where progress had uprooted a tree and toppled a cupola.

It seemed only chance, chance and desperation, that made me park the car on an alien street and take to my feet. I am possessed by a random vagary. I am convinced this is the vicinity of that house where I used to deliver a special delivery letter—so far as I know, the first child messenger in the U.S. postal system, and a girl at that—every Monday morning in summer. The old gentleman had a daughter who acted in summer stock, near Boston. He used to open the door a crack, standing in his nightshirt, sign the slip, take the letter, and hand me a quarter. He would receive his usual daily letter in a few hours; the special was to make up for Sunday.

It was of these two that my mind was thinking when my muscles began their own achievement of thought: my feet and legs recognize the lie of the land, I find a ground-sense operative in me that defies strange buildings to obliterate. My muscles are remembering this street.

I was able to find the house I sought though its front had been altered, its lawn lopped, and bullying new neighbors pressed close against its stubborn old sides. From here I am led to slopes I had flung myself up, and to grades I had lazily coasted down.

Here on foot it became obvious to me that man had once possessed a migratory sense as sure and accurate as any creature's. Before the wheel enabled him to move his goods, the raft to travel without trace, or the wing to lift himself above the earth, his homing instinct had been as valid as magnetic north. Only from disuse and lack of need had this gift worn itself out.

I finished my short tour of Douglaston and headed for Plandome and my dinner invitation. It was late, but I was impelled to turn at the corner in Little Neck where the old blacksmith shop used to be, drive up the road that used to pass the Red Lion Inn, out past Lake Success—legend had said it was bottomless, to swim in it certain drowning—and the old Vanderbilt place where I'd spent many an afternoon in the deserted gardens hunting the overgrown sculptures that had once been its elegance.

I cannot make the turn toward Plandome; I must feel the Roslyn hill under me once again. The fact that I am in a car, obeying lights and jockeying for advantage in the traffic, is less vivid to me than climbing the same hill with my grandfather, in the black buckboard, behind our horse Tommy Martin. An idosynchronatic gift has put the clip-clop of hoofs in my automatic transmission. On these excursions with my grandfather, after a time, long or short, we arrived somewhere and my grandfather would talk to people, perhaps friends. I do not remember that he ever talked to me, this gaunt giant in a black suit and long white beard. I do not know what he thought about on these excursions. This grandfather had a marcescent, dried-out air about him. To recall him is to remember the smell of summer attics, and the feel of haystacks in autumn. I see a silent me beside a silent him, riding for miles; and miles.

I am hating the yellow gloves my mother has forced me to wear, and the yellow hat with the floppy brim laden with daisies. I am loving the fields beside the road and the piece of sky just over every hill that I think is water. But when Tommy Martin gets to the top, the bay isn't there; only the road going on, and on.

Most of all I am loving the way the light shimmers over Tommy Martin's chestnut quarters as he trots, occasionally lifting his tail to dung, dropping it as neatly formed as any lady's coronet braids, and returning his tail just at the very second his neat rosette is retracted from view. All this without so much as a falter in the clip-clop of his neat, oiled hoofs. *Excreta immaculata.*

Reluctantly, I turn back toward Plandome. I pass through big white gates to an area transfigured by real estate promoters. I am greeted by sympathetic host and hostess. "Poor dear," she says, "you got lost! *No wonder,* after all these years."

And he says, guiltily, wishing the glass he is holding would not witness to private drink before the arrival of his wife's friend, "I knew I should have met you at the Queens Tunnel, to guide you out."

While I am kissed and hand-shook and cocktailed I apologize for being late. "But I wasn't lost, I remembered every step of the way; nothing has changed a bit, really."

Clae Waltham
Park Ridge Illinois

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UNREQUIRED READING

List of ten books for a desert island:

1. Boy Scout Handbook
2. Henley's Twentieth Century Formulas, Recipes, and Processes; containing ten thousand selected household, workshop and scientific formulas, trade secrets, chemical recipes, processes, etc.
3. Eight blank notebooks.

* * * * *

Deliver us from a clear, bright, guiding light. So many who have such a beacon stare into its brilliance until dazzled blind. They stumble and blunder and stagger through life trampling on all others who cannot see the same light. Too many of us suffer from the blind staggers.

* * * * *

Upon a blessed few is bestowed the rare gift of being able to know and at the same time of being able to communicate with others. This remarkable quality is particularly rare among scholars and scientists, fields in which too few are able to contribute the profit of a lifetime of devoted study to those of us who have less preparation and background in the subject than do they. Two outstanding examples of such exceptions are Loren Eiseley and Edith Hamilton.

Loren Eiseley writes of man and the natural world, Miss Hamilton of ancient Greece. Without qualification, I highly recommend:

Eiseley, *The Firmament of Time*. Atheneum, New York, 1960. 181 pp. *The Immense Journey*. Random House, New York, 1957. 210 pp.

Hamilton, *The Greek Way*. W. W. Norton, New York, 1930. 247 pp. *The Echo of Greece*. W. W. Norton, New York, 1957. 224 pp.

When Eiseley writes, "It is not the outward powers of man the toolmaker that threaten us. It is a growing danger which has already afflicted vast areas of the world—the danger that we have created an unbearable last idol for our worship. That idol, that uncreate and ruined visage which confronts us daily, is no less than man made natural," or Miss Hamilton, "the Greeks invented the idea of freedom," a reader understands what is being said and why.

Without affectations, footnotes, pretense of omniscience or without being dull, but with brevity, these two towering twentieth century specialists speak clearly to the millions of us who compose the Great Unwashed Mass—the non-specialists.

BER

SUZANNAH

You make us want to stay alive, Suzannah,
the way you turn

your blonde head.
The way you curve your slim hand

toward your breast.
When you drew your legs

up, sitting by the fire,
and let your bronze hair

stream about your knees
I could see the grief

of the girl in your eyes.
It touched the high,

formal bones of your face.
Once I heard it in your lovely voice

when you sang—
the terrible time of being young.

Yet you bring us joy with your
self, Suzannah, wherever you are.

And once, although I wasn't here
you left three roses on my stair.

One party night when you were high
you fled barefoot down the hall,

the fountain of your laughter
showering through the air.

"Chartreuse," you chanted
(the liqueur you always wanted),

"I have yellow chartreuse hair!"
Oh it was a great affair.

You were the most exciting person there.
Yesterday when I wasn't here

again,
you brought a blue, porcelain

egg to me—
colored beautifully

for the Russian Easter.
Since then, Suzannah, I have wanted to be your lover,

but I have only touched your shoulder
and let my fingers brush your hair,

because you left three roses on my stair.

John Logan

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Sanctuary

Dal Stivens

He didn't like me being there and I can't say I blamed him. I wasn't included in the great plan and there had been no provision for me. I was an extra mouth and I had no special skills.

Now that it was achieved and there was nothing more to do but wait he had relaxed; the strain of the days before which had stalked him persistently had now overwhelmed him. He sat for hours in his big chair, arms in lap and his heavy greying head slumping forward. Sometimes he closed his eyes for minutes; at other times he stared into space beyond me as though he was trying to pierce the emptiness that lay outside the immense black hull. I'd seen the same look in the great golden eyes of the black-ruffed male lion in the hold as he searched for antelopes that were not there on a non-existing thorn-clothed plain.

Curiosity killed the cat, they say, but it had saved my life. I'd heard about the ship and gone aboard to see for myself. No one stopped me and afterwards it was too late to off-load me. They'd been instructed not to open the hatches and besides it would have been casting me to my death and they couldn't do it. But all the same, they resented my being saved. I hadn't been chosen and I was saved. The men resented me, too, because I was young.

Only the old man didn't feel this but then he didn't seem to feel anything. He was looking past me when the lion in the hold roared suddenly and brought his eyes back to mine.

"How long?" I asked. We had been shut up now for many days.

"Some time yet," he said. We had lights; otherwise we would have been in darkness. They danced on the white tips of his beard and on the pitch-black hull. "I will know when we can land. I have my orders."

"What's out there?" I asked although I knew.

"Emptiness," he said. "Nothing. The void and below—death. Everything that lived is dead. Perhaps the plants will live—some of them."

His voice had no emotion. He wasn't elated that he still lived or sorry that all the others had died. He had known it was coming and he had time to get used to the idea. But it still numbed my mind.

"All the cities," I said. "The children and

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their mothers, the strong young men and women, the old frail ones. . . ."

He nodded. The macaws in the hold screeched and set the apes jabbering. "It'll all happen again," he said. "The destruction of cities. They'll not be able to help themselves. This ship is believed to preserve the seed of life but it is the seed of death—"

I wondered then, as I had before, why he should have been chosen. He read my thoughts.

"I was given my orders," he said. "I do not question orders. I did not ask why or wherefore. I don't even now though you might think so, my friend. I merely know my own kind—" and with a smile—"myself. The plan may intend it all." He added after a pause, with a faint smile, "I didn't even ask why I had been chosen."

NOAH BELOW ZERO

This must be the wintry weariness of Noah
that drove him against his wife, Uxor.

With dazzled eyes, Blake's Tyger curled up on the couch:
Our old cat licks his dry, furred-over bones.

Drawn awake from a nap, I have missed the sunset.
Slowly I catalogue the hallways of my arms and head.

They are littered with thin snow drifts, foliage.
The dead bird I found today in the street will sing there.

The old cat watches the bird's wings in the heel of my hand.
I do not have to do what I do not want to do.

I call my wife and build my ark,
resolving to fill it only with birds.

William Hunt

"Where are we going?" I asked, glancing at the sealed window.

"Nowhere," he said. "We'll drift and when it's safe we'll land—and start it all again. And see the rainbow in the sky."

I asked suddenly, "The others—do they think as you do?" I did not know because they would not talk to me.

"They are younger, and that, I suppose, is why they were chosen," he said. "I am tired now and wish to sleep." He closed his heavy hooded eyes and was asleep almost before I'd left him. I went down to the bottom hold and the animal noises and the ammoniacal stench stormed the senses. They had taken aboard everything they could in the animal world. Great cages and enclosures filled the two bottom holds.

A towering elephant languidly flicked a trunk over my head while its mate stuffed a pink maw with straw; a hyena thrust a nauseous snout through the bars and its mate sniffed at its hindquarters; an eagle buried its beak in rotting horse flesh while its mate slumbered, defecating once as it did so; two chimpanzees picked each other's skins and then took to hurling excreta at each other. . . .

The girl I liked now approached me. One task I had been allotted was to help with the feeding of the animals and birds. The others were glad of my help though only the black-haired girl ever said so. The feeding kept them busy in the "afternoons" for we tried to keep count of the days and, moreover, the animals' stomachs kept the old time. The lions roared always in the late afternoon. The girl nodded to me and inclined her head for me to follow her along the passageway. Away from the others—and her husband—she chattered as was her habit but only about the animals.

"The poor things. They miss the sun."

"Like us," I said.

"The strange thing is the lion," she said. We'd now approached his cage. He stood there firmly on his great thewed legs, his head nobly uplifted. His eyes looked far beyond us. "We thought we'd have trouble with him, the caged king of beasts and all that sort of thing. Restless and raging. But not a bit of it. He just eats and sleeps and wants for nothing more."

"Like some of us—the first part anyway," I said. The shadow crossed her face as it always did when she sensed I was talking of what was forbidden.

"You'll be fat and out of practice when we land, poor monarch," she addressed the lion. "You won't be fit to earn your living at first." She laughed gaily. "And perhaps the doves won't be able to fly."

"You're anxious to land, aren't you?" I asked. "In spite of the death and destruction?"

I saw her eyes light up with the seed of life. Some of the others came by then. On the men's faces were hostility for me, the unchosen, the unpaired, the rival. I laughed happily and then began feeding the rank chunks of horseflesh, streaked with golden fat and dripping dark sacrificial blood, to the pompous lion and his mate.

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ARTHUR HOPPE:

The Return of the Newspaper Satirist

Burton H. Wolfe

For almost three decades after Will Rogers died in a plane crash, Americans were left without a political satirist in their daily newspapers. It was an extraordinary gap on the political scene. There had always been at least one giant-killing columnist kicking around since the 1830s, when a Maine newspaperman named Seba Smith invented Major Jack Downing to provide cracker-barrel commentary on national affairs. (Some critics might argue that political satire in newspaper columns dates back to Ben Franklin's "Silence Dogood Letters" in the *New England Courant*.) Once Downing had become the talk of the man on the street, a stream of newspaper characters emerged, and political satire in the dailies continued uninterrupted until 1935, the year Rogers died. There was Charles Farrar Browne as Artemus Ward, David Ross Locke as Petroleum V. Nasby, Robert Henry Newell as Orpheus C. Kerr, Finley Peter Dunne as Mr. Dooley, Don Marquis as Archy and Mehitabel, and Will Rogers as Will Rogers.

At times these men seemed more important to the country than the politicians they flattened. The man in the neighborhood saloon toasted Mr. Dooley, the ebullient Irish-American sage, as he proclaimed: "I wish it cud be fixed up so's that th' men that starts th' wars could do th' fightin'. Th' throuble is that all th' prelimin'ries is arranged by matchmakers an' all they'se left f'r fighters is to do th' murdherin'." Millions delighted as Will Rogers offered his summaries of the politicians who ran the country: "About all I can say for the United States Senate is that it opens with prayer and closes with an investigation." Three decades later the prospects of war were more frightening than at any time in history and the U.S. Senate was still bogged down in study-making and filibustering while world problems intensified. But where was the familiar columnist wit to tear the pompous down to size in the newspapers?

In December of 1957 Art Buchwald of the New York *Herald-Tribune* raised hopes for a return of newspaper satire when he wrote a column spoofing the briefings given to newsmen by Presidential Press Secretary James C. Hagerty, who offered the most ordinary acts of Dwight Eisenhower as events of portentous national significance. Hagerty made the mistake of becoming angry and publicly denouncing Buchwald's column as "unadulterated rot," thus turning a piece of satire into an international news story. But Buchwald did not live up to expectations. He never produced another column equal to that one, and today most of his work falls outside the realm of true political satire. James "Scotty" Reston of the New York *Times* turns it out once in awhile, but most of his material is straight commentary. Finley Peter Dunne, Will Rogers and the other newspaper wits of bygone days turned out columns of political satire daily.

The lack of a replacement for them has caused lamentations such as the following from Henry C. Carlisle, Jr., editor of the definitive *American Satire in Prose and Verse* (Random House, 1962): "Today literary-journalistic political satire is all too seldom found. A minor renaissance occurred during President Eisenhower's two terms, but as a general rule it is not the journalists but cartoonists like Herblock and Bill Mauldin, entertainers like Mort Sahl, and occasionally dramatist satirists like Gore Vidal who are the keenest political satirists on the scene today. For the moment there is no reliable source of amusing political commentary in any one newspaper column, and this . . . is an odd and sorry state of affairs."

But Carlisle and other critics are wrong. The sorry state of affairs is not that a daily newspaper political satirist does not exist, but that he does and he is first rate and yet he cannot gain the attention from those newspapers and organizations, or from that segment of the public, whose thinking he reflects.

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" . . . On the *Times,* overt display of humor provokes the sort of suspicion a sex deviate can expect at a policeman's ball."

Russell Baker

The successor to the newspaper political satirists of old is a lanky, wide-eyed, crew-cut westerner named Arthur Hoppe, who was launched on his career in 1960 by the San Francisco *Chronicle* and is now syndicated in 40 newspapers across the country. To the American political scene he has brought not one, but a wide array of captious characters such as: Gary Boldwater, Boy American; Rocky Nelson and Hysterical O'Brien on their "Rocky Road to Happiness"; Just Plain Jack and his Beautiful Society Girl; Ol' Elbie Jay, the friendliest wrangler ever to wrangle his way out of Texas (plus his wife Birdie Bird and their two tads L'il Bird and Bye-bye Bird); Colonel Jefferson Davis Stonewall, president of The Southern Forces of Moderation; President Ngo Mahn Ngo of West Vhtnnng; and the highly popular little old lady in tennis shoes, Miss Amanda, National Commander of !, the superpatriotic action group which stamps out things.

These and others are products of the most slashing wit San Francisco has produced since Ambrose "Bitter" Bierce (*The Devil's Dictionary*)—although Hoppe is not a character like Bierce or cowboy Rogers, the last newspaper column satirist from the West. Hoppe is a sophisticated, quiet-mannered graduate of Harvard, where he studied to be an art critic and museum curator. He did not make it and returned instead to his boyhood home, San Francisco, where he began working for the *Chronicle* as a 24-year-old copyboy earning $35 a week. Graduating to general assignment reporter, he recalls, he "became typed—everyone gets typed at the *Chronicle*—as an execution and humor specialist." When Executive Editor Scott Newhall wanted a column satirizing City Hall politics, Hoppe was selected to write "Hoppe in Wonderland."

The column was a dud until he asked to be permitted to satirize the 1960 presidential election as well. "Then it became funnier," says Hoppe, "because the bigger the subject, the more suitable it is for ridicule; it's tough to make fun of a City Hall supervisor." With the help of the *Chronicle's* brilliant news editor, Bill German—"I owe everything to him," says Hoppe; "he taught me to look at things like a Martian, which is essential for a satirist"—the column caught on and grew to the syndicated "Our Man Hoppe."

As the last vestige of a supposedly extinct breed, Hoppe really has brought no pure innovations to his craft; rather, he has adopted Jonathan Swift's biting irony and employed fictitious characters ala Dunne (Mr. Dooley) and Locke (Petroleum V. Nasby) to poke fun at important people and institutions. "It's a strange thing about life," Hoppe muses, "that you can say more outrageous things if you attribute them to someone who is fictitious."

Hoppe's current leading outrage, since it invokes the sacrilege of mocking the President of the United States, is the invention of an egregiously egotistical character named Elbie Jay. The character was a long time in the making. At first *L*yndon *B*aines *J*ohnson was satirized as himself, the great "wrangler" (translate: compromiser, conniver, wheeler-dealer) and superegotist who emblazons his initials on his possessions and even his children (*L*ucy *B*aines *J*ohnson, *L*ynda *B*ird *J*ohnson). There was an early column on Johnson's knowing how to get things done—"and that, in Washington, is the highest possible tribute you can bestow"—in which southerners appeared confident that the new president would be "more realistic" on civil rights, while Negro leaders announced support for him because "he knows how to get a strong civil rights bill through Congress." The Liberals were for him because he would get them medicare, federal aid to education and welfare programs; while the "conservative business interests" were for him because he was "more business-minded." So, Hoppe wound up expressing

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confidence that Johnson would make a great leader for everyone in Washington. But, he added, "I hope he'll make a great President for the rest of us, too."

Upon his first Christmas in the White House, Hoppe noted, Johnson gave a "framed, autographed photograph of the President . . . in living color" to all of his "faithful old retainers," an autographed portrait of the entire Johnson family to relatives and close friends, and a leather-bound copy of one of his speeches to cabinet members. Hoppe naturally decided upon emulation and gave his wife a color photo of himself and a leather-bound copy of his speech to the neighborhood improvement club on "The Need for Clean Sidewalks." To his oldest daughter went a lock of his hair, to her younger sister a week's supply of his fingernail parings, and to his tiny son Tim an "authentic thumbprint, as you are too young to read." Tiny Tim then provided the logical end to the story: "God bless us, every one."

The Lyndon Johnson story, after all, begs for satire. Here is a man who succeeded to the presidency through the epitome of political expediency, winning the Liberals to his side by alterations of his original stand against civil rights bills, his trenchant anti-communist position and his image as the representative of big oil and gas interests. His sometimes ostentatious displays of wealth, his penchant for having the LBJ initials stitched into his clothes (and his children), his family's incredible names with the "Birds" stuck on, and the phenomenon of having a "Lady Bird" as the First Lady of the "Greatest Nation on Earth"—all were ripe targets for a satirist. Hoppe had the field all to himself and took it with the introduction of mock TV adventures of the "rootin'-tootin' Jay family" which he sarcastically dubbed (in deference to the departed Kennedys) "a new cultural series."

Elbie Jay and his birds live together in a big white house which Elbie considers a "right fine place—soon's I get my initials branded on these fixings it's going to seem just like home." A typical adventure finds Elbie's press secretary horrified over the decision of the great man to hold press conferences in the white house because it will spoil his public image. But Elbie, who is famous for solving enormous problems with totally irrelevant folksy sayings, quiets him with a typical aphorismless aphorism: "As my granddaddy used to say: A mule down a gopher hole is worth six crows in the schoolmarm's toolshed." With that the press secretary is ordered to "open that there door and herd 'em in."

ELBIE (cool as a mushmelon): Howdy there, boys. Glad you-all could come chat a spell. Have a souvenir ballpoint pen and a souvenir ashtray. Had a little trouble getting my picture on them pens. Lucky I'm tall and lean.

ACE NEWSMAN: Sir, what are your plans for increased monosodium glutinate exports to the Common Market in view of EFTA's opposition to the GATT agreements on . . .

ELBIE: That's a right fine question you asked there, son. (To his press secretary: Unscrew a souvenir doorknob for that lad.) And I want you-all to know we're a working on that problem mighty hard. Now, boys, have you-all seen around this place? This here's my office and that there's the Blue Room. Skeedaddle along now. And this here's Birdie Bird's bedroom . . .

BIRDIE BIRD: Elbie! You've just got to learn to knock.

ELBIE: Now don't get your feathers ruffled, Birdie Bird. Our dear friends here have seen ladies in pin curlers before. And this here's our L'il Bird's bath. Ooops, excuse us, L'il Bird. And this here's the back yard and that there's my horse on which I'm about to ride off into the sunset while you boys go write your mighty fine stories about my warm, lovable family and how I'm working hard on any problems you got on your minds. (To his press secretary: Cut down a nice souvenir chandelier for each of the boys on their way out.)

In another column headed "Elbie Jay Shines in the Dark," Hoppe quite naturally took up the subject of economizing by turning off the white house porch lights late at night. With Elbie's press secretary holding up a match for them to see by, the following exchange takes place:

ELBIE JAY: Light the match and hand me that there bill I got to sign. What's it for?

PRESS SECRETARY: (Lighting match): Let's see. Oh, it's that $50 billion defense appropriation.

ELBIE: Fine. There. They don't call me the fastest ball point west of the Pecos for nothing. Now, no sense wasting that match. While you got it lit, get me somebody on the telephone to howdy with. How about that camel driver in Pakistan? Wait. First get me Senator Russell down in Georgia. I want to tell him how I saved another $3.42 this month on electricity.

SERCETARY: I forgot, Chief. You've got one more bill here.

ELBIE: What's it for?

SECRETARY: It's for $167,342.23. From the Telephone Company.

ELBIE: Well, pay it out of that coffee can labeled "Pin Money for Cheering Up Old Friends."

SECRETARY (as match burns fingers): Ouch! Chief, do you really think economizing is worth the effort?

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ELBIE: Son, economy is a wondrous thing. Last month I saved $4.32 on electricity. Them fine gentlemen on Capitol Hill was mighty impressed by what a careful, frugal, trustworthy man I obviously am. So, because I saved $4.32 they are now about to cut the taxes $11 billion. Isn't that wondrous? And now you make sure our reporter friends get a copy of that there bill.

SECRETARY: The telephone bill?

ELBIE: The electricity bill, you cottonhead! Sometimes, son, I don't think you know a thing about economy in government.

* * *

CAN ELBIE keep up his lonely battle to save money? No matter what the cost? Tune in next time, folks. And meanwhile, as you go down the byways of life, remember what Elbie's ol' granddaddy used to say: "Take care of the pennies loud enough, and the dollar'll take care of you."

At times Hoppe's columns on leading Democrats are so biting that it might seem he himself is a Republican. Previous columns on the Goldwaters and Rockefellers have been forgotten because, with Democrats leading the nation, Hoppe concentrates on them just as his predecessors in newspaper satire zeroed in on the White House. At one time Hoppe was having his fun with Gary Boldwater, Boy American, introduced as follows to kiddies watching their TV sets: "(Theme: *The Stars and Stripes Forever.*) Faster than the speed of sound, stronger than the Chase National Bank, able to bound over tall issues in a single leap . . . Who will save us from the Communists? Who will save us from the Keynesians? Who will save us from ourselves? GARY BOLDWATER, BOY AMERICAN!" These days, however, most of Hoppe's satire on Republicans is directed toward the control over their party by the radical right.

To satirize the situation Hoppe usually employs the services of Miss Amanda, whose program to unify the Republican Party is as follows: "Nelson Rockefeller [should] be drawn and quartered or merely boiled in oil! And Javits! And Kuchel! And Romney! And all those other so-called Republicans! . . . String 'em up! Stamp 'em out! . . . We must unite in the mainstream! We must rally behind the principles of true Republicanism! Hang Earl Warren! Abolish the State Department! Eat more yogurt! Crush mental health! Smite smut! Fight fluoridation! . . . Investigate!"

Of his individual characters, Hoppe likes Miss Amanda, National Commander of !, the best—and he always takes care to describe her as "looking particularly fetching today with a new feather boa to match her tennis shoes." In this and many other ways Hoppe differs from many of today's Liberals, who are unable to laugh at extreme right-wingers. Hoppe is almost always chuckling about something as he talks, and he regards anti-communism as "the funniest thing we have going." So it is that even though he will wind up a column with Miss Amanda breaking something over his head, he says of her: "I love her. To me, she's a kind of lovable nut. I like right-wing radicals. Everyone else thinks they're a threat. I think they're funny. Sorry."

THE TOURIST FROM SYRACUSE

"One of those men who can be a car salesman or a tourist from Syracuse or a hired assassin."

—John D. MacDonald

You would not recognize me.
Mine is the face which blooms in
The dank mirrors of washrooms
As you grope for the light-switch.

My eyes have the expression
Of the cold eyes of statues
Watching their pigeons return
From the feed you have scattered,

And I stand on my corner
With the same marble patience.
If I move at all, it is
At the same pace precisely

As the shade of the awning
Under which I stand waiting,
And with whose blackness it seems
I am already blended.

I speak seldom, and always
In a murmur as quiet
As that of crowds which surround
The victims of accidents.

Shall I confess who I am?
My name is all names, and none.
I am the used-car salesman,
The tourist from Syracuse,

The hired assassin, waiting.
I will stand here forever
Like one who has missed his bus—
Familiar, anonymous—

On my usual corner,
The corner at which you turn
To approach that place where now
You must not hope to arrive.

Donald Justice

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Actually, Hoppe often uses Miss Amanda as more than just a "nut." Through her he depicts that type of American who swallows whole and is stirred up by the anti-communist material issued by the government and published in the press, only to be frustrated by the unwillingness of this same government and press to stand up and fight. Her instincts are toward patriotism ("Preserve our glorious American heritage!"), a belief in the superiority of the white race ("Stamp out civil rights!"), and a conviction that communism is the devil on earth ("Civil rights are a communist plot!"). She cannot understand how any red-blooded American could possibly take different positions; thus, her every utterance is followed by an exclamation mark.

Of course, Miss Amanda is so extreme that Hoppe would be offering too much of a scapegoat for others if he rested his case with her. So, he has also invented more typical characters such as John B. Middlerode, member of the Middle Wing, which represents 96 percent of the population and "we're growing."

In an interview, Middlerode supplies these answers to the world's weighty problems:

Q. And what are your beliefs?

A. Well, I don't know. Things are going pretty good. Lower taxes, maybe. Well, you know.

Q. Do you vote Republican or Democrat.

A. (shrugging) Sometimes one, sometimes the other. There's not much difference.

Q. Have you a firm position in international affairs?

A. Sure. We've got to wipe out Communism. Everybody knows that.

Q. How?

A. Well, I guess that's up to the Government. That's what we elect them for.

Q. Are you for peace?

A. You bet, 100 per cent.

Q. Do you take part in peace demonstrations?

A. With all those Nuts?

Q. Mr. Middlerode, Arnold Toynbee and other historians agree that nations, after they have achieved their growth, enter a period when their citizens become self-centered and apathetic. And the nation is then in grave danger of declining into senility and impotence. Do you concur?

A. I don't read much.

Q. It would follow that those who care deeply —the radical left and the radical right—are thus our most valuable citizens as they provoke thought and action. Would you agree?

A. (indignantly) You think I'm a Nut? That's the trouble with this country, all these Nuts running around loose, stirring things up!

And, of course, Hoppe could not fail to come up with an Elmon J. Avernathy, who grew up in a public housing project, survived on the free school lunch program, obtained an education on the GI bill, bought a farm on an FHA loan, secured Federal Aid for Depressed Areas to establish a peanut butter industry—and then, after his accountant informed him he made only $21,372.27 after taxes one year, wrote a letter to his congressman excoriating the New Frontier: "Excessive Government spending means the ruination of us all. I demand a return to the principles of rugged individualism which made this country great. As Senator Goldwater says . . ."

The title over a Middlerode column was "What This Country Needs Is More Nuts," and over an Avernathy column "Be a Liberal—For a While." Both leave little doubt about the thinking behind Hoppe's satire. All of the great newspaper satirists of the past have used their columns "to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable"—which is the very definition Finley Peter Dunne gave as the purpose of a newspaper. Dunne, Will Rogers and Don Marquis are Hoppe's saints and, as their sole reincarnation, he tries to follow in their footsteps. In view of that, he has received a remarkable reception from the nation's press.

In his home grounds of San Francisco, Hoppe is known as a "swinging liberal." The newspaper for which he works has taken the strongest positive stands of any big city daily for peace with Russia, relations with China, disarmament, civil rights, pollution control, city planning, and abolition of capital punishment and the House Committee on Un-American Activities. And Hoppe goes much farther than the editors of the *Chronicle*. Nevertheless, in almost every big city except San Francisco, Hoppe's column is used by newspapers that are considered conservative, while the ones with liberal reputations turn up their noses. In Washington, D.C., Hoppe should appear in the *Post,* but is in the conservative *Star* (not daily, however, and Hoppe says

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"they're having a hard time finding columns they can use"). In Chicago it is not the *News* or *Sun-Times* which publishes his column, but the conservative *American*. In New York, the supposedly liberal *Post* provided an exception for awhile, but dropped Hoppe not long after taking him on—and what paper should take over the column but *Newsday*! (There was an internal editorial battle at the *Post* over Hoppe's column.)

The main reason for Hoppe's appearance in right-wing papers instead of where he belongs provides an interesting commentary on the state of mind at so-called "liberal" newspapers in the U.S.

Hoppe's column had been in existence just a year and a half when he was called to the attention of other newspapers by California Republican Congressman J. Arthur Younger, a conservative's conservative. What attracted Younger most was Hoppe's mock TV soap opera series, "Just Plain Jack—the story of how any typical American boy can reach the top with the guidance of a typical American father who has $100 million." Younger inserted part of the series in the *Congressional Record*.

The accounts of Jack's "struggles to achieve world peace, social justice and rapport with his wife," who was named only Beautiful Society Girl; and the antics of Portly Pierre the faithful family retainer, who offered to push Caroline in the pool again to take the public's minds off Cuba—these and other portions of the series were hilarious . . . but not to the "liberal" newspapers.

"After Congressman Younger inserted the columns in the *Record*," recalls Hoppe, "we started getting these letters from newspapers in places like Podunk, Iowa. They would say: 'We're a small, conservative newspaper in Podunk, Iowa, and we've been looking for a long time for a good conservative political humorist. There has never seemed to be one and now there is, and we wonder if we could have the right to carry Hoppe's columns.' They'd get it and carry it for awhile, until I would write a strong column for peace or civil rights, and then they'd cancel. But other right-wing papers in the bigger cities took the column and kept it (not all: the Los Angeles *Herald-Examiner* published it for some time and then dropped it —B.H.W.). We've tried to sell papers that are more to the left, but they won't buy it."

The main reason is quite obvious. The so-called "liberal" papers have supported Kennedy and Johnson, Hoppe's chief targets. But that is not the only reason. There are also too many Hoppe columns which by contemporary standards are anarchistic, iconoclastic and sometimes even radical. Therefore, they offend the pompous sensibilities of newspapers which pass for liberal. At one time, newspapers such as the New York *Times* would display columnists who were anarchistic and iconoclastic for their day; today, anarchism and iconoclasm are tolerated for the most part only in right-wing newspapers. Russell Baker of the New York *Times*, although he was addressing himself to the subject of why a national magazine of political satire cannot succeed in the United States today, also summed up the newspaper situation in a letter to Victor Navasky, editor of *Monocle*: "Concentrate on articles about menstruation aimed at adolescent girls; tell us again how Jacqueline Kennedy is the chic-est; publish a new prayer by Eisenhower in 36-point type . . . go in for six-color full-length portraits of Fellini in the nude . . . My excursions into irony and satire have always been costly luxuries. It's not merely that the average rate of financial return is two cents an hour . . . On the *Times*, overt display of a sense of humor provokes the sort of suspicion a sex deviate can expect at a policeman's ball." In other words, the modern "liberal" newspapers—most of them, anyway—open their doors only to the socially acceptable. How could they carry Hoppe, then?

"I'm too much of an anarchist without an identifiable position for today's society," he says. "I just can't get worked up over the difference between Democrats and Republicans. Although

GOLDILOCKS

Between the bricks the warmth.
Crumble of weeds. Clay. The honey husk of nuts.

Sunshine after a bitter night.
Like pots of herbs the odors cluster

But the days are getting colder.
Darkening along the highways of the year

Oak leaves, arthritic, stiffen.
The heel of morning hardens.

O but listen, call Goldilocks!
Such a little jug of jelly, so sweet—

Call the silly liar, one last time
Let her display the whiteness of her feet.

Patricia Goedicke

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I believe in helping others, I also believe in individual freedom, and with that position there's no place to go these days. The right wing is for individual freedom, but is against Negroes. The left wing is for state control. There's nowhere for me to go except to anarchy."

Hoppe's anarchy has led him into ridicule of all social institutions, including the church. In a column on the National Council of Churches' crusade against legalized gambling, he had a minister pontificating on the subject while calling out bingo numbers to his flock.

> And there can be no question in the mind of any right-thinking person that legalized gambling —O-84!—is a sin. It not only creates grave socio-economic schisms within the lower strata of our society, but it encourages the belief among people that they can get something—N-51!—for nothing.
>
> So, you see, son, it's the duty of the churches to take a firm moral position on this issue as it has on so many others. Such as peace, violence and segregation. As you know, we churchmen are unanimously in favor of peace (backed up, of course, with a powerful thermonuclear striking power). We unanimously abhor violence (unless, of course, it is justified by the circumstances). And we unanimously condemn segregation. Particularly in the North. Of course, some of our southern churches do have their socio-economic problems which prevent them from integrating at this time. But we must be practical.

If this kind of satire be anarchism, at least it clearly has a social purpose, and while the implied criticism may not pertain to all churchmen, it certainly does apply to many. "I am not terribly interested in whether I'm right or wrong on any given issue," says Hoppe. "I'm never sure whether I'm right. What I try to be is outrageous. I don't want to tell people what to think. I only want to help make them think." In other words, Hoppe is trying to cut through the cant, the hypocrisy, the moderation, the practicality that all smother truth, human feeling and even reality. This is his theme, his fetish perhaps, and it runs through his columns on Democrats or Republicans, pontificating ministers or vast segments of society which he depicts through characters such as Colonel Jefferson Davis Stonewall, president of The Southern Forces of Moderation, "a group often quoted in the press these days."

> Q — Colonel, what exactly is the stand of the Southern Moderate on the question of integration?
>
> A — Well, son, we're for it and always have been. Within limits.
>
> Q — Within limits?
>
> A — That's right, boy. We favor taking colored folks into our homes, our theaters, our buses and our hearts. Within limits.
>
> Q — Like?
>
> A — Like the kitchens of our homes, the balconies of our theaters and the last three rows of our buses. But in our hearts, son, we go all the way.

Not only in the South, but in his own supposedly progressive state of California, Hoppe has seen the results of that eternal slogan of all the hypocrites in society who want an escape hatch from their bigotry or fear: *You can't legislate morality*. He saw a movement based on that watchword grow to such startling proportions that it would succeed in erasing California's fair housing law, and he wrote a column about it.

> (Scene: Mt. Sinai, 1491 B.C.)
>
> MOSES: No offense, Lord, but you can pass all the laws you want to, requiring that people love their neighbor. But it's just not going to do a whit of good. No sir, that's something they've got to feel in their hearts . . . Now, you take that tenth one there, about not coveting your neighbor's property. Why, our whole economy's based on coveting. A fellow doesn't covet his neighbor's house and he won't offer a fair price for it. You try to enforce a law like that, Lord, and you'll knock the bottom clean out of the whole real estate market. It's a clear violation of property rights. It's divisive. It'll just cause bitterness and violence in the streets.
>
> LORD: Then how are we going to get people to love their neighbors, Moses?
>
> MOSES: Well, Lord, as I see it, it's really an educational problem. We've just got to gradually educate all these neighbors to be decent and proper. Like us. So that they're deserving of being loved. Of course, you can't change human nature overnight.
>
> THE LORD (sighing): I suppose you're right, Moses. Hand me the tablets and I'll repeal them over this rock here. Seems a shame, though. They were such nice, simple laws.
>
> MOSES: Sure, Lord, sure. Very basic. But there's one thing you've got to keep in mind in this business.
>
> LORD: What's that, Moses?
>
> MOSES: You just can't legislate morality.

While such a column is not calculated to propel Hoppe to popularity in the family newspaper, one can scarcely argue with the logic behind it, anarchistic or not. The overwhelming majority of the politicians and the "plain people" who so often make it impossible to improve the lot of the Negro in this country are, after all, self-professed Christians, living by the

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Ten Commandments. Hoppe, if he is to be faithful to his calling, must satirize the basic ethic which governs the nation internally and its affairs in foreign lands.

To apply the satirical thrust as the test of America's basic ethic in its foreign relations, Hoppe has invented characters such as President Ngo Mahn Ngo of West Vhtnnng ("I deliberately make it come out like a sneeze," Hoppe explains). With his "trusty little Loyal Royal Army of 6,000 men—and 200,000 U.S. military advisers"—Ngo tries to induce his men to fight, "but each uncivilized troop just lies in his foxhole playing his gree (a kind of 27-note flute) and singing sad songs of love, love being that backward nation's principal staple." Or, even more to the point, there is Prince Sisboombah Shnouk, a dedicated neutralist who makes everyone happy: the Russians, who believe they are saving him from Capitalism; the Americans, who believe they are saving him from Communism; and his people "who couldn't care less . . . happily sploshing around in their rice paddies"—until the Prince announces he will not accept any more American money. With that the U.S. dispatches its "Great White Fleet," surrounds Shnouk with 174 intercontinental rockets and sends in its ambassador with 16 divisions of U.S. military advisers. Prince Shnouk capitulates. "Good," says the U.S. ambassador, stuffing a million dollar bill in the Prince's pocket. "Please accept this token from a grateful American people. Or else."

When necessary, Hoppe has carried his campaign against moral hypocrisy to levels that border on the taboo, thus making it difficult for family newspaper editors to publish him. For example, to satirize a proposal for using a privately run state lottery to help finance schools, cut taxes and "fight communism" (from the brochure of its backers), Hoppe called in his "old friend Mlle. Edna LaNuit, her cheeks aglow with rouge and excitement as she held aloft a zircon-studded placard saying: YES ON THE BEST PROPOSITION!" As well might be imagined, the Best Proposition was outlined by Mlle. LaNuit as follows: "We girls . . . are going to give our all for the State Education Fund. Nightly. Less, of course, 40 percent for us. It's a bigger payoff than we gotta make now. But we figure to get it back in a volume operation . . . It's a worthy cause. And if that takes the sin out of gambling, it sure takes the sin out of . . ." (Hoppe interrupts himself to ask how it would help stamp out communism.) "By spreading the enjoyment of our free-enterprise system," Mlle. LaNuit says. "And now if you'll excuse me, honey, I gotta get out there and hustle. Honest, you don't know what a girl goes through these days, patriotically giving her all to preserve our American way of life."

It is a credit to the newspapers which do carry Hoppe that they have avoided panicking at the first sign of resentment among certain groups of readers. (Hoppe himself says he is "surprised that in this country and in these times I've had any success at all.") At times his ridiculing of prominent men has incurred letters to the editor which excoriate the newspaper for permitting the outrages to be published. Thus, one of the many Goldwater followers who take the Washington *Star* as an antidote to the "pinko" *Post* wrote, after the appearance of a "Gary Boldwater, Boy American" column:

"There is nothing like having a good time by ridiculing our prominent men. We can all have a big laugh about them on our way down to the commissar's office to turn in our property."

Even the peace-oriented *Chronicle* is flooded with protests after a Hoppe column such as "Face Reality—Buy Ant Syrup," in which mothers are advised to poison their children if they somehow escape immediate H-bomb blasts only to begin wasting away from radiation sickness.

> Frankly, though it may smack of pacifism to say so, I do not care to see [my children] die slowly. Quickly, yes. Slowly, no. After all, children have little interest in these complex causes for which we adults are willing to die.
>
> Yet . . . our Civil Defense officials have not faced up to the reality of this problem. To date, this Nation has absolutely no Officially Approved Poison Pill for Small Children.
>
> So, to face up to reality and reassure worried parents, I have done some modest research on which poison to purchase. It should, of course, be readily available, easily stored, economical and pleasant tasting. This last seems of prime importance as forcing the poison down your child's throat could, under certain circumstances, create an unpleasant scene.
>
> With these requirements in mind, arsenic ant syrup seems to fit the bill best. It is sweet tasting and comes in small, handy jars. I would recommend the syrup rather than the paste as the syrup may be described as "cough medicine." If unavailable, the strychnine pellets used for gophers should prove equally effective. They must be hidden, however, in a spoonful of jam or jelly to disguise the taste. The dosage of either depends upon the size of the child.
>
> Unless desperate, I would avoid the mercuric chloride fungicides and the sodium celenate weed killers. While far quicker than radiation sickness,

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GOD'S

Death is relaxing and soft to teach us
it is true about the dullness
and repetition that we keep hidden
or at best seek to conciliate
with a new purchase.
Says the Bible, The glory is God's,
His handiwork,
and praise death too
as of His making.

David Ignatow

SELF EMPLOYED

I stand, listening, head bowed
to my own inner complaint.
Persons passing by think
I am searching for a lost coin.
You're fired, I yell,
after an especially bad episode.
I'm letting you go without notice
or terminal pay. You just lost
another chance to make good.
But then I watch myself
standing at the exit, depressed
and about to leave. I wave
myself back in wearily,
for who else could I get
in my place to do the job
in dark, airless conditions?

David Ignatow

I understand they are approximately as painful. And the whole point is to protect your child from pain.

"The reaction to this column," Hoppe recalls, "was frustrating. Some people thought I was seriously suggesting the murder of children. Others thought I was trying to be funny. Mothers called up and said what is the *Chronicle* doing with a terrible column like that. But you see, I was only using the technique of Jonathan Swift's *Modest Proposal,* in which he suggested that the English raise Irish babies for food. It's the use of cold, scientific, rational solutions to irrational problems that men have created for themselves. What's wrong with that?"

There was nothing wrong with it two and a half centuries ago in England, then the world's greatest power. In that era the satire of Jonathan Swift, which arose from a failure of traditional institutions and beliefs to produce a morality for mankind, was widely acclaimed. Now the nation which England's failure helped produce has become the world's greatest power in a machine (substitute jazz or nuclear) age. It is an age in which a sick society watches helplessly as old traditions are ripped away by the most rapid progress of civilization in history, and morality exists only in sermons and speeches. It is an incredible age in which men are actually preparing to blow themselves up. Quite naturally, then, the most effective American satirists are Swiftians and, because they are, the sick society calls *them* "sick."

Swiftian (today read "sick") methods entail exposure by ridicule and satiric detachment through the techniques of invective, diminution and irony—which are used to beat down the proud fraud of human effort. The most brilliant and successful satirists of our times, Mort Sahl and Dick Gregory, use these Swiftian techniques. And Art Hoppe—who is a truer Swiftian than either Sahl or Gregory—is to the newspaper what they are to the entertainment business. But while Sahl has become a great commercial success and Gregory has become the hero of America's Negroes, Hoppe has been unable to capture the imagination of his countrymen as did Finley Peter Dunne and Will Rogers before him.

It is strange that this should be so, because Hoppe has improved on his predecessors. Although their cracker-barrel wisdom is still revered, much of what Dunne, Rogers and the others wrote is no longer amusing to contemporary Americans. Hoppe has put their time-tested methods into a highly effective modern format, while still throwing in the usual capsule moral. Hoppe's morals, which usually appear at the end of the parodies in his columns, are written specifically to meet the madness of our era —for example:

On war: "Now that 20 years have passed, I think we are often secretly nostalgic. For say what you will, war is exciting. And peace, say what you will, is dull. So every 20 years, when the boredoms and frustrations of life mount, we begin dreaming heroic dreams and march off to kill each other. Of course, you never get killed yourself. It's invariably the other guys. For in our nostalgic dreams of war, each of us is the hero. And the hero always comes through okay. You know, like in the war movies."

On peace: "The only grave danger I foresee is that without a constant diet of wars and crises, we may ultimately achieve true world peace and universal love. And, if I understand the

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foundations of our economic system correctly, that will spell the end of the human race."

On civil rights: "As I keep saying, the major thing that keeps us from being a model nation is that terrible mistake we made 100 years ago. You know, preserving the Union."

On the philosophy of moderation: "As long as gradualism is the prevailing philosophy, you can't blame Negroes for sitting down all over the place. A hundred years is long time to stand and wait."

On the great battle between Conservatism and Liberalism: "The Liberals are for the Government pushing everybody around. And the Conservatives are for the Government pushing everybody else around. Henceforth, when it comes to choosing between Conservatism and Liberalism as the defender of Individual Freedom, I'll take Vanilla."

On the battle between Barry Goldwater and Lyndon Johnson: "For months these two able and energetic men have been touring the hustings night and day making hundreds of speeches to get their messages across to the people. And they have succeeded. Consequently, the voter now feels he has a choice between a trigger-happy nut who wants to blow up the world and a power-mad crook who will enslave us all."

On U.S. policy toward social upheavals in other nations: "If our generals are a bit confused, you can't blame them. But I do feel our civilian officials should further clarify the distinction they draw these days between good and bad revolutions. They could do it by adding a single sentence: A good revolution is a right-wing revolution . . . Overseas."

On the situation in Vietnam: "The one thing our officials did which helps us in Vietnam was to announce that henceforth . . . the democracy-loving general in any nation could be identified by the fact that he's the one we send our money to; and that's been the cornerstone of our foreign policy ever since."

On blockading Cuba: "It works out so fine, I now fear some warmonger will suggest we blockade Russia on the grounds Russian missiles are as much a threat to our security as anybody else's. Nonsense. Blockading Russia clearly would be unethical and illegal. They're almost as powerful as we are."

On banning "Robin Hood" from the public schools: "Actually what I'm for banning is Winnie the Pooh. Because if we're going to start banning childhood heroes on the grounds they're not fit to emulate, that's what we are going to wind up with: a nation of Poohs."

On organized labor's solution for solving unemployment through the shorter work week: "Today, as you know, is Labor Day and I feel we should pause in our pleasures to salute the men and women of the American labor movement and their dedicated stand on the principle of labor. They are, of course, against it . . . I figure that by 1992, with luck, we'll all be unemployed."

Hoppe's admirers find greatness in his aphorisms, but apparently their enthusiasm is not shared by modern editors, and the quotations are not apt to be catalogued along with some of Rogers' and Dunne's in *Bartlett's*.

It is unfortunate that Hoppe and the "sick humorists" in other media are downgraded by modern social critics who fall into the seductive trap of nostalgic reminiscences over past heroes such as Dunne's Dooley. On the subject of this curious critic's malady, Gerald W. Johnson had some provocative comments in his review of a book on Dunne (*The New Republic,* December 21, 1963). Johnson first points out that "the discourses of Martin Dooley are now almost unreadable because they are couched in a dialect that has since become extinct." His main point, however, is: "That Finley Peter Dunne was charming admits of no doubt; that his courage in the face of death in a cruel form was magnificent is equally true; but that he was as true to his calling as he was to his friends is open to question." More specifically, Johnson notes that Dunne was "a poor judge of basic character. The disastrous essay in which he attempts to exculpate Harding and his associates is not the only instance in which he exposes his delusion that any good fellow must be essentially a good man . . . [Dunne's] loyalty was often blind. Therefore, he was essentially a lightweight, and it was his misfortune to live into a time that had urgent need of a satirist who was a heavyweight and whose courage was social as well as personal."

Hoppe is the kind of satirist Johnson is looking for, beholden to no man or ism, possessed of a piercing mentality that often enables him to cut through all that is phony in a single sentence, courageous enough to risk the loss of his column through invasions into the realm of that which is held sacrosanct by the mass of men. Predictably, however, the editors and publishers and even critics like Gerald Johnson who profess to be looking for someone like Hoppe will not even admit that he exists. As Mr. Carlisle says, there is no true political satirist in the newspapers. After all, what though Hoppe ap-

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pears in 40 newspapers and has two books, published by Doubleday, in circulation with total sales around 20,000? That is a far cry from the heyday of Hoppe's predecessors.

Until Will Rogers died, the satirical newspaper columnist was one of the true giants of American life. For half a century Seba Smith's column was in the mainstream of politics as the average citizen saw himself talking back to the big shots through the wisecracks of Major Downing. During the Civil War, when David Ross Locke of the *Toledo Blade* produced Petroleum V. Nasby—a pro-southern, pro-slavery, hard-drinking, office-seeking copperhead Ohioan—President Abraham Lincoln remarked: "Nasby is worth a full division of infantry to the union cause." Mr. Dooley's thoughts on politics were known to the letter of their Irish-American dialect among millions of Americans; his creator's books were best sellers, and at times Finley Peter Dunne was esteemed more than the President of the U.S. As for Will Rogers, he appeared not on the editorial page—where Hoppe is buried amid other columns and the general hurly-burly of today's newspaper—but on the front page of the second section; and Rogers and his wife and children were called "America's Unofficial First Family."

As for Hoppe, we have the word of his friend Pierre Salinger—a target of Hoppe's when he was press-secretary, incidentally—that "Art is the best political humorist in the country." But then again, Salinger could not even win a California senatorial election against a man whose sole qualification for the Republican nomination was his appearance as a song-and-dance man in Hollywood movies. (But as Art Hoppe might sum it up, that is no mean qualification in our society; in fact, in Washington, D.C. song-and-dance may be the most meaningful of all qualifications.)

In any event, there is no sign that Hoppe will approach the heights attained by his predecessors, and he certainly expects no help from the type of newspaper on which the existence of his column now depends. He has satirized the whole situation in a column headed "Typical Housewife—Unbelievable."

> That's the way it goes. All my heroes invented highly believable characters who said great things. Mr. Finley Peter Dunne had Mr. Dooley, the witty Irish barkeep. Mr. Don Marquis had a cockroach named Archy who painfully wrote deathless commentary by falling on his head on the typewriter keys.

And what have I got? A housewife named Mrs. Helen Jones. Who'll believe that?

Yet there really is a Mrs. Jones. She really is a housewife. She really writes chattily every couple of days. And she really has some extremely rational ideas. Like:

"This morning I got a call asking me to canvass for the City of Hope. Every other week there's a drive for some good cause. Heart, Cancer, Liver and Spleen. None can really be turned down in good conscience, but I got to wondering why I resented them so much. Here we are, willing to spend $770 million for the first Saturn Booster Rocket and yet medical research goes from door to door begging for handouts. Why couldn't it be the other way around?"

You can see right there that Mrs. Jones, the Typical American Housewife, has got a head on her shoulders. For our Government's now shelling out $1 billion a week to devise and maintain weapons for making healthy people dead. And if we spent the money instead to devise and maintain methods for making sick people well, I'm sure we'd all feel healthier.

Funds for our weapons could then be left to door-to-door campaigns conducted by our private, non-profit charitable institutions. Who wouldn't have anything else to do.

Due to the traditional rivalries between these institutions, Mrs. Jones points out, we'd probably still have to put up with a number of separate campaigns each year. Such as "The Polaris Pledge," "Rockets to Russia" and "Christmas Seals for Napalm Bombs." But eventually we'd hope to incorporate all these in the annual, all-out, community-wide campaign—The United Defense Crusade. "Your One Big Give!"

We'll have an Advance Gifts Division, a Kick-off Lunch and huge billboard campaign (space donated) urging the public to "Give Till It Hurts!" The whole Crusade to culminate in the "Mothers' March on Pacifism." (Leave your porchlight on.)

Best of all, every citizen can then contribute whatever amount he wishes to our National Security. Depending on how secure more bombs and missiles will make him feel.

Personally, I plan to unscrew the bulb on my porchlight and bolt the latch. And should some militant mother knock anyway, I shall open the door as far as the chain will allow, smile pleasantly and quote those immortal words of Mr. Bertrand Russell: "I gave at the office."

But, despite me, I have full confidence our private, non-profit, weapon-raising campaign will go over the top. Unlike most of our charities. For while we may preach the salvation of our fellow man, history shows we'll invariably contribute considerably more time, money and energy to blowing him up.

So, hail, I say, Mrs. Jones, the Typical American Housewife. And her solution to these twin

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dilemmas. As a commentator on world affairs she may be unbelievable. But so are the problems we face.

Hoppe is all too cognizant of his own dilemma, but there is no way of resolving it without compromising himself, and this he will not do. He realizes that if he laid off Lyndon Johnson the more "liberal" newspapers might take on his column. But how can he ignore what he considers the very epitome of the ridiculous? He also realizes that he is too anarchistic, but the world situation leaves him no choice. Viewing it as the Man from Mars, he finds two supposedly intelligent, civilized peoples preparing weapons of such mass destruction that life itself could be ended—and this madness supposedly based on a squabble over two isms which, in the final sense, do not even really exist.

"The result of the whole situation," Hoppe explains, "is that irreverence has become the important thing to me. It's the key. I don't feel I'm engaged in any identifiable cause and I don't look for tangible results. I'm not interested in power. I want to outrage people in order to force them to think about the validity of the principles by which they live. But once I've written something, that's the end of it. I tell myself: This isn't having any effect because who'd listen to a nut like this. And you know, I think the answer is that this kind of thing I'm writing doesn't have a big market any more. It's not commercial. And if you're not commercial in this country, where are you?"

Where Hoppe is, for the most part, is in a type of newspaper that has an editorial policy diametrically opposed to his own beliefs. Perhaps he will yet find his funniest satire in his own predicament. Can you imagine anything funnier than trying to make a bunch of conservative Republicans laugh at Barry Goldwater, Lyndon Johnson and the rest of the All-American Boys?

ONE DAY IN EARLY APRIL

One day in early April I sat in a room
And the roses on the wall began to tremble
As if a wind had slipped among them.
Clouds appeared and a garden, and birds
Flew back and forth without a sound.
I saw my mother, risen from her grave, walk toward me,
Her long gray arms at her side, her evening gown
The same as in a portrait painted twenty years before.
Her parents followed, and their parents,
And all the invisible relatives. Like a wind
Over the lawn they came, calling for me to join them.
And I told them I would, I would.

Mark Strand

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Albert Drake

Tourists, then.

As Manolo petulantly insists, we cannot know Spain. Not *really* know it. How can we, from a country where chrome flanks stiffen us upright and dollars cushion our fall, understand this Spain of Franco a hundred years behind the calendar. Spain of the grandees who cheer the bull in the old Plaza Mayor; of the Inquisition (which Manolo claims still exists); of Quixote.

Tourists, then. After four weeks in the country we have seen more of Spain than Manolo in his twenty-four years. Yet, I suppose we do not know; nor can we ever really know.

But standing on the Puerta del Sol, bearded, slightly soiled, reeling from the wine, and the bloodless heat which crackles across the plateau, waiting for Manolo to appear from the night class he teaches at the Berlitz school, the scene is not too different from other points on the globe: prosperous neon repeats itself, autos fill the Calle Mayor with darting, mischievous noise, substantial buildings bound it. On this street the tourist stands out from the natives only because the latter are usually better dressed. It is the beggars; the lottery sellers, tickets pinned to their clothes like fluttering rags; the sidewalk vendors, who peddle candy and single cigarets from shoe boxes, who identify the country. Spain, desperately poor.

We wait in the hub and crash of the evening crowd: myself, my wife, and Manolo's American wife, Billie Jo. It is she who truly does not understand Spain, for she does not understand Manolo. They met when he was an exchange student at our school; they married when Manolo found himself trapped in Franco's army, earning three cents a day and five loaves of steely bread. Trapped, he remembered the fat girl in the States whose father had a small plane, which intoned money somewhere; a correspondence followed, heavy with Manolo's flowery metaphors, which wooed Billie Jo and, more important, her mother. Manolo, the latin enigma.

But Billie Jo. Manolo insists she stand out against the background, and stand out she does. He has commanded her black hair be dyed a magenta, her heavy butt be tightly encased in his cast off dress slacks. I suggest to Manolo that Billie Jo certainly appears different, and yet common, a differential pun which escapes him.

But the men of Madrid she drives to a hot, fettered madness. It is for this reason, not the smell of American money, the traffic cop by the American Express guides her to the island in the center, then allows traffic to flow while he steadily propositions her in gay, lilting Spanish. Billie Jo, the blushing bride of six months, stands helplessly on the island; she cannot protest or even acquiesce, for she knows no Spanish beyond the fundamental pleasantries. Or the monkeys who follow her miles across town, all the way from the American Embassy where she goes daily to hopefully arrange papers for Manolo's immediate exit; who even enter the house under pretext of selling magazines to the American lady: without shame they pull a shabby *Reader's Digest* from a sack.

The coal sellers are less subtle. From their truck tops, fist sized lumps of coal are slammed at her wide butt, with accuracy.

It is too obvious, to me at least, Manolo has made a marriage of convenience, which would please his ancestors: he literally stands with one foot in New York. An outrageous asset when he deserts the army, which he plans to do as soon as he can steal enough rubber stamps, and official papers to forge; and when, foremost, the money from Billie Jo's parents arrives.

Finally our boy emerges. One can see he is disturbed: his brow is dark, his lips surly. Without a glance in either direction, he knows the state of affairs here, his world. He rudely leaves the sleek blonde who exited with him, and as we abruptly walk away, he says: "There is one of your kind. She is here to *help* the people. The poor *people*." Caustic words sit on his black tongue as he mimics; stretches the last into a dozen haughty syllables. "I think she's a Franco spy. Jesu crist," he says to me, hands palm up in supplication, "this country will drive me mad. I *swear*, when I desert the army, I will never return to Spain while Franco rules. Jesu crist, I swear. You simply don't know at all. The misery here is excruciating. Informers, spies, homosexuals, the monkeys—utter depravity." The 'monkeys' are the aimless, the unemployed, the unemployable who roam the streets, 'monkeying around' as Manolo puts it. "This is Rome in

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A Spanish Parable

its final decadence, before the fall. I assure you I have no desire to be caught in the debris."

Etc, etc. But why record more. It would be funny if it were not so familiar. Manolo, in another country, across an ocean. Yet the spew of ideology, impatience, sourness, random hate, falling in clipped English, is the same. Manolo the marxist, the revolutionary, the dissenter, who fights the world's windmills but abhors violence. If I toy with him and suggest the hour of the barricades is at hand; that he must stay and fulfill his destiny, he will peel the pout from his lips, furrow his brow and hotly exclaim: "No, no, you miss the point. Lenin waited in Switzerland for the Russian revolution. Stout leaders must be apart from the blood bath." Actually, non-violent overthrow of the country would suit Manolo; one feels he dreads not only a blood bath, but any sort of bath. This is mild humor which I keep to myself, knowing Manolo's petulant nature; he and Billie Jo are the only people we know in Madrid, and one must stay somewhere. Besides, with Manolo I always have the feeling something funnier is just around the corner.

Yet he is verbally dedicated to his task, and now raves in English, with little chance his dull dialectics will be overheard by the informers he fears. As we walk toward the bus stop, through a night which eases its heat, everyone pauses to stare at young Trotsky, who shouts and waves condemning gestures. Billie Jo's pleasurable butt gets second notice; then my beard. Even Avis, my wife, is not immune, for in our months of travel her skirt has shrunk to above her knees.

"America," Manolo rants, "has at least pretensions of democracy. Which is why I want to return. It is not *too* bad a place."

No, he was very fond of the grand stores. To enter one door of a clothing store and emerge from another, wearing an entire new wardrobe, stolen. When these clothes were stiff with dirt, they would be thrown away; the cycle repeated. Why didn't he wash them? Simple. Cleanliness is next to godliness, and Manolo prefers to be next to neither. Too, in this way he always dressed in the fashion of the moment. A fastidious exterior over his unbathed body: the impeccable question mark.

Shall I give you other intimate snapshots?

Manolo in the back of a car with a girl; both are nude. The policeman's flash plays over Manolo's hairy brown, unwashed body and he freezes as if the beam of light were ice; barely stammers out: "You mean, in this country you do not do this?"

Or Manolo caught for a spectrum of petty crimes, feigning ignorance of both crime and language. He forges answers in a mawkish, guttural tongue. "What I did? No speak so the English. Chicky chink, see see."

Surprisingly, it works. Every time. If he is a bad criminal, he is a convincing liar. The cop, who understands the frantic passion of this Spaniard, lets him off with a warning, as Manolo blasphemously crosses himself again and again. The others simply give up; communication is impossible. The crimes forgotten. And, I must admit, this side of Manolo harbors a cleverness I rather admire.

"In America, of course, my main protest was the discrimination: besides being dark—*swarthy*, if you prefer—and refused rooms by shitheel old ladies because they thought I was a negro, I found myself also objectionable as a Marxist, an ex-Catholic, a jew, a foreigner and *God* knows what. *Really,* my dear fellow, I told you about the time the Dean of Men, that fat, hairless pig, called me in for singing *communist songs* in the Student Union. Jesu crist, really, I don't know *any*—not *one*. Those were fascist youth songs."

No doubt. Although I try, I cannot feel sorry. Manolo advertised his beliefs and renunciations through thick lips; he earned his world of terror, mostly imagined. For any bad word or careless expression sent him into a violent persecution depression. No, not violent. Passive depression, for Manolo, that child of war, would bear no violence. It is this contradiction of character which makes him so *terribly* misunderstood, and also so interesting. He is exclu-

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sive as a shabby, minor myth. His revolutions will be peaceful coups; dancing in the streets will follow, and the next day an ideal Marxist state will be imposed, without a hitch.

"And here?" I ask, taunting him.

"Here," he says, the suggestion of a dark smile fading, "here is all that too: being *dark* is not Castilian, the noble bood. My records say I am a jew; that I have renounced the Church. But *this* is a police state, Franco, the military, and most of all the utter depravity. I swear, I can't stand it."

"They exploit him," Billie Jo says. Her dime-sized mind has been indoctrinated.

"Let me be graphic." Graphically, Manolo's lax hand becomes a fist. "Today a very stupid, monkey-faced man tells my captain, in utter astonishment: 'You mean that *pig*,' pointing at me, 'speaks *three* languages?' Oh, I tell you, the revolution will come, this country breathes the air of tyranny until the lungs are *filled*."

Pretty metaphors. But Manolo has worked up a frenzy, and he is really not himself. Or perhaps he really *is* himself. For as we wait at the traffic light, Manolo, hands in his pockets, an idiotic grin on his inclined face, turns to the cop who stands there, and none of us are prepared for what follows.

"Look at this fat pig," Manolo says, as if he were asking directions. "This is the stooge who wears the yoke of power." We are amazed. The smile flicks over Manolo's face and disappears as he turns to address the policeman, their stomachs almost touching "Be careful, pig, that the yoke does not weight you to the earth."

Through all this the policeman, who obviously doesn't understand a word of English, smiles now lazily at the boy who speaks soft phrases to him; then at us. He doesn't understand. Nor do I. As the hairs of my beard stiffen with fear, I grab Avis and we run across the street. My beard would identify me with the opposition, accompanied with Manolo's insults; I have already smelled the jail deep in the bowels of the city.

We run, Billie Jo shakes herself along, Manolo dallies. We turn off the busy Calle Mayor and into the dark puzzle of cobbled paths, where our steps slam out and echo back, until it seems the sound will wake the Civil Guard. In the arcade of the Plaza Mayor, Billie Jo stops, pants for air, and collapses against the pillar, her breasts heaving. We stop, and soon Manolo saunters up. It is his moment of triumph.

"Why did you *run*?"

"Guess," I say.

"And you, Billie Jo. Why did *you* follow? Why didn't you stick by your husband?"

She followed us for the same reason she follows Manolo's politics and idiotic suggestions; for the same reason she came to Spain; she is a herd by herself, easily led.

"Well," Manolo says, "it is a fine night. The stars throw down their first lances of light. Why don't we walk home. Anyway, I don't have the bus fare."

We travel the edge of the Plaza under the arcade. Two centuries ago this was the bull arena; now it is a vast open area boxed to its edges by three story buildings. Small holes at each end, diagonally opposed, release small cars which honk once before speeding across the space, reach top gear and honk again at the opposite end; their yellow lights float like tallow in the darkness. Past Las Cuevas de Luis Candalas, with its phoney eighteenth century bandit who tries to shill us in; down the wide, slope-worn stairs into the Calle de Cuchilleros.

"Here," Manolo says, "the Casa de Botin, once frequented by Hemingway. The menu is immortalized on the last page of *The Sun Also Rises*. I should like to take you there, but I am only a poor proletariat. But come, let me show you the *one* good thing in this rotten country."

We follow. Down a street where one can visualize Cervantes out for an evening of adultery; all along here, built into the masonry, are small stand-up bars. We enter the first; they are all pretty much alike: shrimp hulks, olive pits, bread crusts, cigaret butts, toothpicks carpet the floor. There are no chairs, but no one seems to

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stay that long. The wine is thin but cheap; the glasses dirty. Manolo has tutored Billie Jo to count in Spanish from one to ten, and she orders for us; a trained seal trick carried off with all the pleading and abortive aplomb of a pageant. A tumbler of wine; with each a small plate of sardines or mussels or olives, gratis.

"You don't *mind* buying do you, old man?" Manolo says to me. "Call it your share of the American foreign aid. No? You *don't* mind. Well, in that case let us have an order of mussels. *They* are the only thing worthwhile in this rotten country."

The man busily fills glasses, collects change, splashes vinegar. The small closet is packed; hot bodies rub hot bodies, with electric friction. A family scurries in, the mother passes the row of glasses back to the children, ages about six to twelve; the last glass she drains, sucks up the small plates of food; the glasses are shunted forward, and the family leaves. Bang. A distressed young guitar player comes in, finds he cannot move his arms in the crowd, and leaves, taking with him his unsung sad song.

A can of mussels is opened and drenched in vinegar. Manolo adds more vinegar, and sucks the briny mussel into his thick, black mouth with a pouting sound. A juke-box plays Spanish music, American style. We all take a mussel, and raise our glasses.

"To Spain," I say.

"Batshit," Manolo says, and drinks, although he does not like wine. One feels he could be a food fadist very easily, if he cared at all for his body.

We eat and drink quickly, then leave. Twenty feet away there is another bar; the process is repeated, pretty much the same. Except that I don't buy Manolo a can of mussels this time; nor does he press good fortune to the limits.

When I raise my glass this time, I look into the shifting lights of Manolo's eyes with all the seriousness I can muster. "Just think how lucky you are, Manolo. Wine is cheap; all this delicious seafood. For fifty cents one can get quite drunk. And fed, too. You're a very lucky young man."

"Is that *so*?" he asks, his eyes rolling upward. "If that is the case, you may have my place in the army. One can imagine how drunk one can get on three cents a day. As such, you can stay here forever. But frankly, I don't know *why* you ever came to this country. Jesu crist, *why* did you?

"Why, to see you, Manolo. Came all the way to see you."

His head jerks; lips curl into a sneer which means he is smiling. His heart is touched.

"We're Franco spies," Avis says.

"Castro sent us," I say.

His head swings from one face to the other; for a second it is a dream come true. Then his eyes droop and roll back, retreating under heavy lids. "Batshit."

"It's true," I insist. "Castro sent us to organize the ferment in this moldy country."

"Really, it isn't *right* to joke. Not about *that*."

That being the pin which holds his tattered dreams together.

Into the street which tilts downward to the Manzanares river and the Ponte de Segovia. There is something in the night, the dark secret streets, the wine, which goes to the head. I believe even Manolo feels it. His rich voice bellows across the roof tops in song:

> Ooowww, I don't want to go in the armee,
> I don't want to go to war.
> I just want to stay in Picadilleee,
> Living on the earnings of a— high born laydee . . .

The houses shoved shoulder to shoulder are dark, except for tiny corrugated slats of light which peek from shutters. Darkness brings into focus the near stars, a universe of cold, intense points and one feels fixed in time and space. But even at the same moment there is a shuttling ambiguity in the air, an evasiveness, which plunges one into the city's collective history, here in the underbelly. That old man over there, slouching as he cradles his maimed left hand, is it Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra?

As we stumble down the cobbled street, Avis grabs at her foot. She assumes a curious stork stance, holding a bare foot in one hand and her cheap Japanese thong in the other.

"Oh. The strap broke." Where the straps meet the sole, the yoke has pulled out. There is no remedy; she will have to walk home half-shod.

Then, as if Manolo in his cleverness had planned it, there is a crack in the masonry beside us which turns out to be a cobbler's shop. Only the thinnest yellow light proves its existence. Manolo, who I am certain did not know it was there, takes Avis' thong and leads us over the hump stoned walk, into the niche.

"Here," he shouts proudly, "here is the working class, my people. You see they work late, for the Americans."

I flinch a bit when Manolo assigns the epithet working class to himself. But, who knows, he

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may have worked once. Besides, I am curious. Everything is painted in shadows, the deepest purple-black, a unity of dark values; into this springs the dull yellow light from a small window, but there is no door. The room is fabricated from some extra space tacked on to the next buildings, a few stones mortared on, where the sidewalk bends. At our voices, the two men look up in surprise; the shallow light plays back the continuation of black, the hundred dark half-tones of leather around them: it is a scene which might have been caught by the brush of some Flemish *genre* painter. The text of their trade is written everywhere: leather dust powders the sweat of their faces; their hands are hard crusts of cordovan hide. Their eyes squint into the poor light, their grimaces are relieved only slightly as Manolo spews his language out, and shows them the broken thong. One man leaves his bench and takes the thong, to study it; finally he shakes his head, picks up a heavy needle and with long, continuous strokes sews. There is an undercurrent of Spanish between the men.

"What does he say?" I ask.

"That it can be fixed, temporarily." Then Manolo shrugs, and actually smiles. "Well, you see the working class. They struggle to exist, while over *there*," he points to the Palace on the rim of the hill, "the rich pigs are fattened for the slaughter. What do you think *now*?"

"Tell them we are very poor. That we are pilgrims." Although the scene is fantastically picturesque, I cannot reject a chance to puncture Manolo's rhetoric. But there is no stopping him; he is at home with the proletariat.

"*Alemán*?" asks the man who is now sewing.

"*Norteamericanos*," Manolo replies, and turns to us slowly, as if he has done a trick.

"Ahhh, *norteamericons*," both men repeat, to one another and the air.

The strong stitch finished, the man leans out the window, his black arms merge into the darkness as he stretches to the ground and slips the thong on Avis' bare foot. The other man, with barely enough room to move his elbows, takes from the wall a worn, fat *bota*, like a shiny kidney, and hands it to Billie Jo. With a flare of knowledge she unscrews the horn mouth and tilts it to hers, squeezing.

"No, not like *that*," Manolo roars. He takes it and swings the dark bladder into the air, and the jet of wine slips into his black mouth; slowly he draws the *bota* back, and cuts the stream off with a neat flick of the wrist. "That it how *we* working men drink our wine."

"Bravo, bravo," shout the cobblers.

My turn. I emulate the master; my form is good, but I miscalculate and the stream emerges to strike my cheek, dripping down my neck. Everyone has a good laugh. I shrug and hand the *bota* to Avis, who holds it close to her mouth and avoids my error. She slowly moves the *bota* away, the stream lengthens but in a second her mouth is full, her hand shakes as she tries to swallow; when the wine begins to run from the corners of her lips, she withdraws the *bota*, and the stream collapses in a line down her blouse.

"Bravo, bravo," shout the cobblers.

She hands it through the window, and they take their swigs. One man moves against the wall so the other can hold the skin at arm length, tilt and squeeze; the wine lunges into the mouth, the throat accepts it; for an interminable minute the man drinks and the only sound is his throat working; then he drops the bladder. With considerable shuffling the men exchange places, repeat the scene, and the finale is a caucus of laughter in blackness.

"What do I owe?" I ask.

Manolo says something, then turns to me. "Nothing."

"Oh, but I should pay them something," I insist, fumbling in my pocket. The cobbler gestures no, "Por favor"; there is no charge.

"Keep your money," Manolo says. "This is not the basement of the Hilton-Madrid. This is the working class. These are *my* people, the masses," pointing to the two thin men, cramped in their space. "You Americans," he shouts, with a sweeping gesture which includes Billie Jo, "you think anything can be bought with money. Well, there are things not for sale."

It is all so absurd, and yet, as Manolo swells with pride, I see a darkness behind his eyes which surprises me, deeper than the shadows. A glinting black enigma, which is chopped off as he shifts his head to lend us his profile. He preens himself as he heartily shakes hands with the cobblers; this dramatization has bolstered his spirit. He shows us terror, he believes, in a handful of leather dust. Yet there is a new hardness in his expression, an uncertain hardness both fearful and foolish. There is no doubt but he would like to literally sit on the ground and talk of the death of kings, if I suggested it.

We all shake hands and as I turn to go I see Manolo is already partway down the hill, his legs casting out in firm steps. His voice cuts the silence in song, cleaning the cats from the street, striking lights in black windows; he sings in Spanish, some fascist youth song, no doubt.

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The Sisters

Rosalyn Gebhart

The prospect of a vacation unrolled before him like a charging streamer unfurling placards and waving flags. Until the train left the city far behind he sat with eyes closed, sopping into himself the rhythms of the wheels that screamed over the tracks. The violence was a music that carried him on its power. All he had to do was go limp and let it.

Not quite all, he discovered when he left the train at the junction. He felt that sand grated through his blood vessels, his thighs trembled holding him upright. All right, he said, so you're a tired boy. It was as though flu had changed his glandular propensities and turned him sissy.

The young woman striding across the platform to meet him greeted him as coldly as if he was. "You must be Adam. I'm Leslie." There in South Jersey the announcement fell on air. There was nobody to eavesdrop but the blue-coated clerk who dragged the bulky mail sacks across the platform to an office that looked like a coffin on hind legs.

She touched his hand and then fled down the steps to the yard to a small blue car. She slid behind the driver's wheel, adjusting her skirt over her knees, leaving Adam to hoist his valise into the back seat and climb in beside her. He couldn't think of anything to say except about the weather and the train trip and she offered no question or comment as she drove deftly, swiftly, stilly, over the highway as though, for the fifteen minutes it took to the house, she were transporting his cadaver to a mortuary. "This is a vacation?" Adam asked himself with a glare at her indifferent profile.

But after they entered the dim hall she showed a kind of thawing. She peered up at him and even took his elbow, shyly. "You can put your valise in your room later. Just set it here for now." Obediently he placed it at the foot of the stairs.

"Come into the garden," she said. "They are waiting for you there." He followed her through the rooms to the side porch and down the wooden steps.

They ran to greet him. They put him in a low-slung wicker garden chair with a back rest, and a table at his elbow. They said, "Rest." They said, "You've been ill, you must be so weary from the journey on the train."

The garden was planted with rose and lilac bushes and white flowers that grew close to the earth and opened into little naked stars that gave off a pale odor. The air was fragrant with the mingling of scents.

Caroline wore white chiffon gathered in rows between which her breasts pointed. Gold hair hung to her shoulders, sparkling crystals of sunlight glistening a net over it. She held a fluffy cartwheel of a garden hat.

Rosamund was a peasant, brown hair in two braids dangling, cotton blouse gaily cross-stitched in blues and reds and saffrons that repeated in the pattern of her bright flaring skirt.

They came and went about the garden. Their voices made small laughter in the sunny afternoon. Leslie stooped to pluck a yellow rose from a shrub. It was folded into a curling bud, red under its cup. "Look," she murmured, holding it to Rosamund. Her short hair was smoothed behind her ears. The sisters' foreheads touched, bending over the flower. Their breathing merged into one breath.

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Adam dropped his head to the top of the wicker chair. His eyes closed against the light of the sun and the dazzling sky. His nostrils inhaled a perfume resembling the swooning sweet smell of ether. He sat up sharply. Green blazed into his vision blotting all shape until his sight focused again.

Rosamund ran and knelt at his feet. "I'm glad you've come," she cried, throwing out her arms. "I shall bake you a pie spilling over berry juices."

Leslie halted in the path before them. She laughed a husky uncertain laugh. The soft white blouse rolled away from her throat exposing delicate pulses beneath thin tanned skin. Adam looked into her face. Her hands fisted in her skirt pockets, just the thumbs showing at each slit. "I'll teach you golf and tennis if you like," she said. "Robert wrote that it might be good for you." Her voice relinquished the words quietly but as though they were difficult to say.

"And I," whispered Caroline, eye slits like moon crescents, "shall dance for you at dusk to the music of gypsy singers."

"Well," said Adam, "that will be very nice I think." He shuffled his feet in the dusty patch of ground where the garden chairs and tables were set.

Rosamund sprang up. The three sisters linked arms. "We are glad you have come," said Caroline. She was the eldest. "Be welcome."

"Why thank you," said Adam, shifting in his seat. "I've been ill and your brother has been very kind; he nursed me through a bad siege of flu. And now that I'm on my feet again he said he was sure you'd be glad of the company because he said he was afraid—I mean—that is, he said you were so hospitable, you see."

"You mean," said Leslie with laughter at her lips, "he said he was afraid we were getting barmy without a man around. Because you are indebted to him he sent you and you had to come."

Adam blushed. He lifted his hand in futile gesture to his hair. His hair was stiff. It was an indeterminate shade of brown. His neck was thin. His head was big for his body. It was a round head while the body was lean and long.

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He wore eyeglasses most of the time. A bookish young man from the city.

The three sisters were planted like branch entwined trees, link-armed before him. He cleared his throat. He glanced at his wrist watch. "Well," he said. "It's almost three o'clock. I'd better be getting my valise unpacked."

Rosamund leaped forward, feet arched, toes poised like a ballet dancer's. "I'll come with you," she cried. "I'll help." She grasped his hand, tugging him up from the chair.

"Oh no, darling." Caroline bent in one curved unbroken motion and gathered the youngest sister back. "You know," she shook her head, dimpling at Adam. "Mundy is so impulsive sometimes. Aren't you, darling?"

Rosamund loosed her voluptuous figure from her sister's hold. Her lips were pink and full and her skin was tan, scrubbed rosy-cheeked. "Why can't I help him unpack?" She pouted.

They were silent. The rose and lilac bushes waved in the light breeze. Adam caught at the side of the chair.

"Well." He moved forward. The trio stepped into the path behind him. "That's all right," he called, darting ahead up the walk to the porch steps. "I'll find the room."

"Oh no you couldn't." Caroline's laughter rippled along the air current quivering under the sunlight. Adam stopped at the porch door. She came up to him. "I'll show you the way," she said. She turned to her sisters. "I'll be right down." Rosamund followed to the steps but Leslie drew her back into the garden.

"It's Bob's old room," said Caroline. She apologized for its appearance. "Robert swore vengeance if we changed so much as a feather in the bed. He hates—what he calls feminizing."

The room in that house was a splintered orange crate in a decorator's window. It held a cot, unpainted bookcases obviously and crudely Bob-built—crammed with shredding periodicals and shabby books—, an ink-smeared desk. Middleaged college banners were still tacked on the greyly white walls. The rest of the house was chintz, floral wallpapers, dainty tables. Except Leslie's room. That was modern-simple with angled furniture and a black rug. It had the clean bitter smell of turpentine. Leslie painted.

"They're talented girls," Bob had told Adam. "I'm the one in the bunch without a thing to recommend me. Mother was about to become a dancer—great, of course—when she allowed Father to persuade her to marry him. She never forgave him." He laughed. "I believe she never forgave me either for being male and therefore insensitive."

LANDSCAPE'S END

(for A.M.L. & W.B.)

It has stopped being fun—
The wrong friends, the all-night
Chess games in half-empty bars,
The underfurnished rooms
Governed by landlords whose
Very languages
We can not care about. Persons
Sitting apart
In wedges of sunlight on
March mornings near some
Public garden, air mail letters
Spread out in our hands,
Or down the street in cafes
Run by young wives,
Counting our change with
Muttered asides, we
Have over-extended, like old
Aircraft miles out at sea,
With no way to turn but back.

Charles Wright

Their mother was dead. She died when Rosamund was small. The father had remarried when Bob—who came two years after Caroline, one before Leslie—was out of college and established as a civil service lawyer in Manhattan. Now the father lived at the other end of town with a wife neither talented nor productive. But, said Bob—"amiable. Most amiable."

"They come to tea sometimes," explained Caroline, smiling gently. "Naturally we have no feeling against them. We're really awfully fond of them. But we couldn't *live* together. We're so different, you know. Elizabeth—that's our father's wife—is a perfect *heathen*. She has no appreciation, no art. We have our own lives."

"Naturally," said Adam.

"Our mother was beautiful," mused Caroline. She rested her elbows on the tea table. They sat in the living room. The curtains were drawn to keep out the sun. Rosamund and Leslie sat in chairs each to one side of the big double windows. They held their cups and saucers on napkins in their laps. Their faces were in shadow. Leslie stirred the sugar in her cup.

Adam sat where Caroline had placed him beside her on the sofa. He put his empty cup and saucer on the table. She poured more tea into the cup from the silver teapot.

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from POEMS IN POP ART:

A SONG TO BE SYNDICATED

Not nearly there, our rebirth journey wrecks.
We are the Katzenjammer Kids with sex;

And must again, in early adolescence,
Act out the dual and destructive presence.

I am Hans, dark still, still true to type.
In short, I am a shadow-archetype.

You, recognizable behind your tan,
Are still incipient blond superman,

Too alien for twin, too close for brother.
But here is Mama, otherwise Great Mother,

And here the Captain—all that burgherdom
We take up arms against, and would become.

Inspector, bored *voyeur* of what old crime,
Seem rather, by your bearded visage, Time.

Break, Time, these frames and set us free: cured freaks
Borne oppositely down the strip of weeks;

I, in the flat balloons my set speech fits,
Always to say, "Auf wiedersehen, Fritz."

Turner Cassity

"Mother could have been a great dancer," she said. "She taught me when I was a child. We were very close. She was frail. She was not built for—baby bearing."

Rosamund sighed. It wavered from the corner, meeting Adam as he reached for his teacup. He left the cup on the table. "No, no more tea, thank you," he said.

Caroline stood up. She tinkled the china bell on the tea tray, to summon the servant. "I hope she hears. She pretends not to. She's sullen and slow. The best you can get in this town. We won't let anyone like that sleep in the house. You know," she patted her gold hair at the sides, "we like to keep the feel of ourselves in our home. Other people can be so—intrusive. Especially clumsy servants. They leave their fingermarks all over one's soul, as it were." She smiled. "You can appreciate our feelings."

He nodded gravely and excused himself. He went up to Bob's room to rest. Before dinner they called him to walk into town and get acquainted with it. "It's a rather usual place," said Leslie. "Bustling middle-class busyness."

"Quite dead," groaned Rosamund. "Dead people with souls sipping strawberry ice-cream sodas through yellow straws. Life in the garish drug store. Rural boys giggling together. It's death."

"Boys don't giggle," Adam said, defensively.

"Nowadays they do." Caroline drew Rosamund to her side. "Mundy feels a loneliness in spite of our companionship. The people of her own age here are so inferior. You'll see."

Adam nodded grimly. He walked between Rosamund and Leslie. Leslie kept space a cold solid element but Rosamund pressed through it: he could feel her breast through her dress and the cloth of his suit, like an animal pursuing his arm. He glanced at her and saw she was flushed, moist at the mouth corners.

Caroline took her arm and led her around behind Adam and Leslie. "We're crowding the sidewalk," she said. "It's best to walk two and two."

The town streets straggled one into the other. The store windows glittered under the last orange burn of the sun. A group of narrow-waisted boys with long hair leaned beside the movie house. They grinned and stared as Rosamund passed. "They were at high school with me," she muttered.

"Now you can see what we mean." Caroline rested her hand on Adam's shoulder. "This place is our home but it's vile. Shall I tell you what it is?" She paused a moment, laughing lightly. "It just occurred to me. It's completely American, hard and bright. And we're apart from it all. We have so much—music, art, poetry. I think in this entire town of about six thousand inhabitants, we are the only individuals. Our lives encircle beauty."

"I don't know," said Adam. "It looks kind of pleasant to me." He thrust out his chin and

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gave an embarrassed laugh. "I like it. I never thought about beauty as something that stays still in one place. I never thought about having to make a ring around it to hold it in."

They were quiet. He swallowed. He saw the drug store over the way. "How about a soda?" He turned his brief smile on them.

"Oh fun." Rosamund started across. Leslie put a blunt-fingered hand on her arm to restrain her. "I think not," said Caroline. "It will spoil dinner, you know. Besides we should be going home now."

They dined in the garden, the sulky domestic carrying the dishes back and forth. Caroline shrugged. "She hates us to have dinner in the garden. She says it's a nuisance to *drag* plates and trays from the kitchen all the way down here. But it's so much pleasanter. Anyway we've achieved a compromise. When Mary serves it our way she can leave immediately after and we attend to the dishes. Oh well!"

Rosamund and Leslie cleared the table. Caroline led Adam to the parlor where she played and sang French songs to him. "Aren't they charming?" She left the piano bench and went to sit beside him on the sofa. "I love my music."

They had dined late, in honor of Adam they said, because city people liked it that way. It was nearly half past ten when Rosamund and Leslie rejoined them.

"I believe I ought to be turning in." Adam stood up and smiled all around at them. "Kind of tired with the early trip on the train and everything."

"Of course," Caroline exclaimed. Impulsively she took his hand. "How thoughtless of us. We usually retire early anyhow. A good night to you."

He locked the door of the room and sat at Robert's old desk, trying to write a letter. He heard them opening and shutting doors down the hall. They cried goodnight to one another.

In the silence he turned out the desk light but continued to sit in the dark, listening. A door down the hall opened. The footsteps whispered stealthily near. There was a muffled knocking at the door. He sat still in the dark, listening.

Two other doors opened out there and the sisters rushed together. "Oh Rosamund," cried Leslie. "How could you?" Rosamund sobbed. "Hush," said Caroline. "It's a hot night. Come into the garden, come into the garden."

He went to the window that overlooked the garden. The sisters came, all three white-robed, into the moonlight. They walked among the shadowed bushes. Their voices wafted to him on the perfumed air. He saw them clearly in the moonlight, spinners moving together and apart, link-armed embracing, vines that have grown around one another, inescapable. Their hair hung loose, mingling. He saw them clearly for the first time, spinning in the moonlight, he read their names Clotho, Lachesis, Atropos. He fell back from the window, shaking.

When he peered again, Leslie and Caroline had twined Rosamund between them. Their voices lifted to him like the murmur of the sea, rippling with desire. They went into the house, bearing Rosamund between them, and he heard them up the stairs and into Caroline's room. The door was closed on their weeping.

Silently in the night he packed his valise and lay down on the bed, fully dressed.

In the morning Caroline came alone to the breakfast table. With the vaguest of mumbled excuses Adam took his bag and fled, to catch the first train back to the city.

Haggard-eyed he sought their brother at lunch in the crowded restaurant he knew Robert patronized. "Look," he said. "They're your sisters. Save them. At least Rosamund."

Innocent-eyed, Robert surveyed him. He swallowed a forkful of chicken salad, helped himself to another. "I send them an allowance," he at last replied. "I sent them *you*. What more can I do? Marry them? *That* would be naughty."

"Then don't send them an allowance," Adam cried, slapping the table top so that the dishes danced. "Let them be poor so maybe they'll have to go to work and learn how to be human. You and your father are buying freedom from guilt, you think. Stupid! They almost got *me*; I'm still not sure my life has been saved." He crossed his fingers.

"I think you're nuts," said Robert.

"My God," cried Adam. "What loathsome ignorance."

It was the end of their friendship.

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The Dark Chance

A Novel in Three Parts

Rex B. Ross III

God—the pathways of his purpose
Are hard to find.
And yet it shines through the gloom,
In the dark chance of human life.

Aeschylus

PART II: AUGUST, 1945.

Warui Prison was built atop an enormous slag heap in the middle of narrow Fuki Valley. The top of the cone had been leveled off and a high slab fence enclosed the little area. A building of weathered, unfinished lumber filled more than half the enclosure with a six-foot wide earthen path between the inside of the wall and the sides of the barrack. The other half of the little compound held a U-shaped structure built against the slab wall of the fort. It housed first a little bath house with its tank of water. An ordinary little door in the fortress was opened only when the Japs went out to kindle a fire in the pit under the bath tank. Adjoining the bath was the rude galley with its rice and tea-water boilers. Then came the tiny closet of a locked storeroom. Across the end of the compound were three crude rooms used by the Japs to house dying prisoners. The other arm of the U-shaped construction consisted of the guardhouse suite; in the very corner were the *eso* cells—punishment boxes so small a prisoner could neither stand up nor lie down stretched out flat, a little room used to store prisoners' ash boxes, an office, and adjacent to the gate with its huge, solid wooden doors, the guardhouse.

In the first tiny hospital room, John Morton Grace sang his life away since the night six weeks before when he had raged into the office and demanded that Captain Watanabe return to John his stolen baby.

Robert Jeffrey had been in the third cubicle for more than three months, waiting to die but refusing to give up, keeping his skin and bones alive with sheer will power.

It was my third day in the middle room. Recurrent attacks of malaria had me so weakened that delerium got me and the Japs thought I was done for. The rain stopped about daybreak. By ten o'clock, I guessed it to be, the standing rain had run off and prisoners emerged from their blankets like larva from their skins, doing their laundry or bathing by turn in the little bathhouse. Some sprawled in the dirt to soak up sunshine. The men on the day shift in the mine had not seen daylight nor sunshine for nine days.

We worked nine days then, near the end of the war, and on the tenth day we rested, cleaned ourselves the best we could, washed our clothes free of the damp dirt and coal dust and switched shifts. Sunday had become a derelict, popping out when the Japs gave permission. I remembered that Joe Madison had asked one time, "Ever think about the hundreds of years it took to reach the regulation of time with the Gregorian calendar and the hundreds of years it governed us? Now with a simple little declaration, the Japs have destroyed time for us. To us the calendar is a memory, a part of ancient history," and it was true. That's what I was thinking about that day in the little room where the Japs had put me to die. I never thought about dying

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at all. I was thinking about having to go back to the mines as soon as the Japs discovered that I was not going to die. Whenever I remembered returning to the mines, what Joe said about the measurement of the time came back to me.

Lifting myself on my elbow, I wiggled myself around until, by putting my eye to the crack just right and lining up on the knothole in his side of the double partition, I could see Jeffrey in the next death room. I discovered that he was either too far gone to hear me or too weary to hear me. After a minute, I picked him up in my sights where he lay on the sleeping platform against the wall on the far side of his room from me.

Robert Jeffrey lay on a cushion of woven straw mats on the wooden platform in the hospital room, a misnomer for the eight-by-eight shanty. A raveled washrag and a towel with a gaping hole worn in the middle draped over the end of his platform to dry. At the side of his bed stood a crude table fashioned of scrap lumber. On it lay a Bible, his shaving gear and a small cardboard box which contained his valuables—probably a pencil stub, a couple of scraps of paper, or a pair of used shoe strings, maybe even a crinkled snapshot of his parents. That's the kind of stuff that most of us had left by this time.

An old *saki* bottle, half-filled with water, stood on the platform near him. His tin teacup stood beside the bottle. Near it were his three aluminum dishes half-covered with a frazzled rag.

A tin *bengo* stood on the floor between the bed and the crack I peered through. On the floor beside it lay another Bible with half the pages torn out.

But for these things the room was bare: rough, unpainted boards, a window giving a view of the little yard, and a corrugated tin roof on which even a gentle shower sounded like a torrential downpour.

On the other side of my room, John Morton Grace—white, twenty-four, docile and deranged, had not so much as a pair of broken shoestrings because he might hang himself with them. He had only the bare boards and those peculiar treasures locked in his mind.

Jeffrey's head, propped on a straw-filled log of canvas, rested in such an awkward position that he faced the wall with the window in it rather than the ceiling as a man ordinarily should when he lies on his back. His eyes were closed, eyeballs protruded from the deep pits of their sockets. His skin was transparent, death colored. In truth, Robert Jeffrey was a living corpse. He knew that and postponed the coming of death by a simple, adamant refusal to die, to surrender against hopeless odds. Not understanding why he held on to the useless pod of his life, hang on he did.

For the third time since morning inspection, he opened his eyes, rolled his head toward the *bengo* bucket, then lifted himself on his elbow, staring at the floor which must have seemed like a bottomless pit into which he must lower himself. He swung his spidery legs over the platform and eased his shivering shanks onto the crude seat over the old oil can. I could see the veins on his shaven head bulge, see the blood pulse wildly like an untamed thing pent up. He clung to the platform for support. His chin rested on his breastbone. He clamped his legs to the old tin can to still their violent trembling. Shifting his weight slightly, he freed his right hand and I saw him direct the hot urine first against one side of the can and then the other and noted how he relished the sudden warmth of the tin can against his legs.

Then he relaxed his taut muscles a moment to rest them, preparing for the ordeal of the climb back onto the platform. As the cords in his scrawny neck began to stand out from his preliminary efforts, I dropped back flat on my boards, unwilling to witness his agony again. I swore to myself each time that I would never again put my eye to that crack but horrible fascination brought me back to it. At the slightest sound from Jeffrey's room, I propped myself and lined my eye up with the crack and the knothole, powerless to resist.

Overcoming my revulsion with myself for being a peeping Tom, I lifted my head, aware for the first time that some of the men sat on the ground under my window talking. "Getting over this wall would be the easiest part of all." I recognized Scott's voice. He was small, wiry and tough, his voice close to falsetto. "The easiest of all," he repeated.

"What about the guards?" asked Luke.

"Listen!" Scott admonished.

Inside my room, I, too, listened and heard the sentry on patrol outside the board fence stumbling around in his oversized boots, every few steps stopping to kick a stone which rattled down the steep slope of the slag heap.

"It sure wouldn't be hard to learn his habits," Scott said. "Plenty of other noises right now. He'd be a cinch to follow at night." Silent until the sentry had passed that part of the wall nearest us, Scott then said, "I've lain awake . . ."

"I can't believe it," Jones interrupted.

"What?"

"That I heard you say lain or that you ever stayed awake more than thirty seconds when you flop."

"I've been awake lots of nights and heard the noise these monkeys make. Sounds to me as if they're afraid to be alone in the dark. Wouldn't be the slightest trouble to check on the inside guards either."

"Speak of the devil." I sat upright in bed to look out the window and glimpse the inside patrol swaggering toward them. "*Kutski*!" Jones yelled and the three of them leaped to rigid attention with their backs in front of my window.

The guard motioned to them to sit and continued along the inside of the U-shaped yard until he disappeared around the barracks on the unceasing patrol of the yard and the narrow strip between the building and the fence.

Scott and Luke sat down but Jones felt of the clothes draped on the straw rope stretched across the corner from my window to the other side of the building. "Almost dry," he reported.

"How'd we ever get over the wall?" Luke resumed. "She's pretty high."

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"How high'd you say she is, Jones?"

"Ten or twelve feet, I guess."

"Say ten or twelve feet then," Scott began, paused and asked, "why not eleven feet?"

"Nobody ever builds anything eleven feet high, not even the Japs."

"OK, say it's twelve feet high. All we'd have to do is boost one guy to the top. He could pull the second guy up and the last guy could crawl up his legs. We'd drop on the other side and be gone."

"Yeah," Luke countered, "but what if you break your leg when you land on the other side?"

"What if a ton of coal drops on you in the mine tomorrow?" Scott asked acidly.

"Sometimes I wish that it would. That'd take care of everything."

"Then why worry about the possibility of a broken leg?"

They sat in silence for awhile. I climbed from my platform, feeling weak and unable to make it for a few moments, then the dizziness left and I walked to the window in time to see the guard round the corner and the three men leap to their feet. "Keep sit. Keep sit," he said, grinned amiably and walked past them.

They sat again and I leaned on the window sill above them not meaning to eavesdrop but just not speaking to let them know I was there. Idly, Luke thought out loud, "Sure wish I had a smoke."

"What'd you say?" Scott yelled.

"I didn't say nuthin'," Luke cried in astonishment.

"Like hell you didn't!"

"Honest I didn't, Scott."

"You're crying about no smokes again. What do you think about us? Don't you suppose we want a smoke? Don't you think we need 'em, too?"

"Sure, Scott."

"Then shut up about them. We could forget about it once in a while if you'd shut your big mouth."

"Oh, take it easy, Scott," Jones said.

"Why the hell should I? That big ape is always causing trouble with his mouth."

"Luke cause trouble?"

"The only time he says anything is when he ought to keep his trap shut."

"I was thinking about a smoke myself," Jones tried to soften the effect of Luke's crime. "No need to get frantic about it. We can't all be stoical like you, Scott."

"What's stoical?" Luke asked.

"Strong like Scott."

"Strong like Scott!" I could imagine Luke appraising Scott's puny body.

"Inside. He's got a strong character and little things that bother the rest of us never even occur to Scott unless someone mentions them," Jones needled his friend.

"I see, inside," Luke answered thoughtfully, "like a lining, you mean."

"Damn you, Jones," Scott cried. "You think you're so god-damned smart. The time'll come when you'll be down with the rest of us."

"Seems to me it's here. We're all in the same mine."

"Rat's ass!" Scott shrieked. "You know what I mean. Nothing touches you. But it will. Wait and see. Your day is coming. Just you wait and see."

"I'll wait."

"Sure you'll wait. You'll wait until we're all dead and our ashes are boxed up in the Jap gatehouse."

"I wish I was on my farm right now," Luke said wistfully. He invariably wished himself out of any unpleasantness between his friends and usually onto the chicken ranch he hoped to own someday.

"Chicken farm!" Scott scoffed. "What's so Christly attractive about a chicken farm anyway?"

"I'd always have enough to eat," Luke said.

"Enough to eat! You're getting like the rest of these weak bastards, always thinking about your gut. Nobody worries about chow Stateside."

"I did," Luke said guiltily.

"When?"

"Lots of times. There was lots of us kids. Pa's farm wasn't very big and it was rocky and not much good. Lots of times we didn't have nothing but corn bread and sowbelly gravy and not enough of that."

"If it's such a lousy life being a farmer, then why do you want to go back to it?"

"It's the only thing I know real good."

"You're no dummy, Luke," Scott, remorseful, tried to bolster Luke's ego. "There are plenty of things you can do."

"Oh, I'm not too dumb to know when I'm hungry but I'm not the smart kind. I'd never get anywhere. No matter what I did, I'd still be a farmer. All I want is a little old forty acre plot with a shack on it where I can be my own boss and have nobody to tell me what to do and how to do it and when to do it." Luke stopped to contemplate. "As soon as I git away from these Japs I'm agittin' it, too." He sighed. "A chunk of ground, some chickens, a pig and a cow, and me."

"No woman?" Scott taunted.

"Gittin' women's no trouble when ya got yore own ground."

"Points for that one, Luke," Jones said. "Where is this place where getting women's no trouble. Arkansas?"

"Yup."

"Then that sounds like a good place to be, eh, Scott?"

"Me marry a big barefoot gal from the sticks?" Scott laughed derisively, shrill static ending in a shriek.

"What's so funny? What kind of a woman do you expect to marry?"

"A rich one!"

"Sure, we'll all marry rich ones," Jones agreed.

"No." Scott was emphatic. "We won't all marry rich women. But I will. Don't ever say I didn't tell you."

"Why you really believe that," Jones cried amazed.

"You damned right I believe it."

"You pipsqueak, Scott. And you've got the guts to laugh at Luke's nice sensible dream about a chicken farm."

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"What's wrong with my idea?"

"Just everything. Take a look at yourself. What can you offer a rich woman? You're short, skinny, homely, squeaky-voiced and a pauper. What have you got to exchange for a bag of loot. Stop kidding yourself."

"I'm not kidding myself."

"Wake up, Scott. You're chicken ranch material," Jones taunted.

"You wise . . ."

"Can't you take it, Scott?"

"I know that when I get out of here, I'll never do another day's work as long as I live. I'm not settling down in Gobbler's Knob, Arkansas, to raise a bunch of snotnosed brats. I'm marrying me a rich woman and living on easy street."

"I give up," Jones capitulated. "Sounds so impossible, you'll probably get away with it. Somebody will grab you off just for laughs. It happens every day. Some nutty heiress trades her pottage for a messy birthright."

The guard passed again, grinning cheerfully, almost benignly, as they sprang to attention. This time Scott felt the clothes before he sat down. "Getting over this wall would be the easiest thing. . . ."

Jones interrupted. "You've gotten over that wall every day for the past six months. That's as far as you've ever gone. Where do you go from there?"

"I haven't figured that out yet," Scott admitted.

"I have."

"Where?"

"Siberia."

"Siberia!" Scott and Luke echoed.

"Where else is there? The Japs got China. You can't swim the wide Pacific. Still want to scale the wall, Scott?"

"What else is there? Anything beats this."

"It's probably a hundred miles to the coast."

Scott snorted.

"It must be at least three hundred miles across the Sea of Japan. Does it still sound good to you?"

"I will if you will," Luke answered.

After a long pause, Scott came up with an unrelated topic. "You figure everything out don't you? Before you ever make a move, you figure everything out."

"Try to."

"I've never really seen you enthusiastic about anything since I've known you, not one damned thing. Four goddamned years and I've never seen you excited. Always calculating every angle, weighing every possibility. Then when you get everything worked out, you never do anything because it wouldn't be worth it in the long run."

"Anything wrong with that?"

"Everything."

"I don't see what it is."

"Rat's ass! All this thinking'll never get you anywhere 'cause the answer you come up with is always no."

"So?"

"So the hell with it." Scott changed the subject. "Watch that." I glanced across the yard toward the new guard on the inside patrol. It was Crashdive, one of the least predictable. Jug started from the bath house, carrying a bucket of hot water in each hand. Crashdive followed him all the way to the barracks door. None of the watching prisoners knew what he was up to. As Jug stepped through the door, Crashdive shouted, a primal bellow: "*Kutski*!"

Jug froze, bewildered. Crashdive stomped up to him, the focus of all prisoners' eyes, screaming, "*BAKA, BAKA*!" (damned fool, damned fool!) and glaring. He cursed Jug. Then he hit Jug hard on the side of the head. Jug's cap flew off and landed on the ground at Crashdive's feet. Muttering something monosyllabic and ferocious, Crashdive pointed to the cap.

Astonishment mingled with the pain on Jug's face as he put the buckets down and stooped to retrieve the cap. Crashdive swung an uppercut that connected with Jug's nose. Tears of pain and shame and anger blinded Jug. He swayed from the impact. His knees buckled in an effort to retain his balance. As he went down, he groped for support and one hand fell on the edge of each bucket. Just as he regained his balance, Crashdive kicked him quickly and sharply once on each shin. Jug fell, turning the buckets over upon himself. Crashdive stalked away to resume his patrol, without a backward glance at Jug who sat there in the puddle of steaming mud, humiliated, smarting from the painful blows, drenched in his wasted water and bewildered, apparently still unaware of the cause for this unprovoked assault.

The three witnesses outside my wall galvanized to attention as Crashdive approached. "Keep sit. Keep sit," he said agreeably, smiled benignly, and walked past them.

"I just don't understand it," Luke worried aloud.

"What now?" Scott asked.

"Why he did that to Jug and then was nice as pie when he went past us thirty seconds later."

"Simple arithmetic. Jug broke a rule."

"What rule? Jug didn't do anything I could see."

Scott quoted, sing-song, "War prisoners will not wear hats in barracks. War prisoners will wear hats outside barracks."

"But Jug didn't have a chance to take his cap off," Luke protested.

"Now you're quibbling," Jones cut in. "You can't qualify these rules. Live by the letter of the law."

"I don't understand these people," Luke complained.

"And never will," Scott blurted. "It's just pure luck that it wasn't you getting that beating instead of Jug."

"One way you can look at it," Jones said, "we all stand in the same spot Jug just got knocked off of."

"How'd you figure that?"

"Either way, Jug was lost. If he stopped to take off his hat outside, Crashdive was going to nail him, he didn't stop until he crossed the threshold so he got it for being inside with it on. Looking at it from that angle, how many of us will survive the winter if we stay here? What are the chances of making it if we go over the wall? Damned little either way."

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"Rat's ass! I'll live forever."

"How?"

"I don't know but if I'd been cut out for a box I'd have been ashes a long time ago."

"You're tough as they come Scott. But is that tough enough? Just like Jug, we're set for a beating either way. Bound to lose."

"You can jam that bullshit," Scott was cocky again. Then he withdrew to silence.

"I sure am getting hungry," Luke finally said.

"If you don't quit harping on food," Scott threatened him, "you can just quit hanging around me."

"I don't hang around you, Scott," Luke came back honestly. "I hang around Jones the same as you do and as long as he don't git sore and tell me to shove off, I don't care what you say."

Scott rose, sneering and belligerent, glared for an instant, then jerked an armful of clothes from the line and marched to the barrack, pausing at the door only long enough to call back over his shoulder to Luke, "You big stupid ape."

"That's just Scott's way. He didn't mean it, Luke."

"He meant it all right. He sure enough meant it now, but he'll be over it by the time I get in the barracks." Luke rose and picked the few remaining items from the line before he followed Scott inside.

Jones began to untie the rope. By the time I had my blanket rolled and ready to return to the barracks, Jones had already made a hank of the rope around his arm and was on his way inside.

Crashdive approached, watched him and as Jones walked away, Crashdive's eyes traveled from Jones's bare feet up his long legs to his thin waist and broad shoulders. As Jones stepped through the door, Crashdive shouted and Jones froze. I noted that he had forgotten to remove his cap. Crashdive drew near. He touched Jones tentatively on the arm and then squeezed his bicep. "Strong, strong," he admired. Looking first one way, then the other, he plunged his hand into his pocket and pulled out a single cigarette which he handed to Jones. "You strong," he repeated as he walked around the corner on his patrol.

"*Arigato, Arigoto,*" Jones called after him.

Over his shoulder, Crashdive exhibited his mastery of the English language. "Sank you, sank you, sank you."

I opened the door to my cell and walked across the yard, trying to conceal the weakness I felt by maintaining a brisk, even stride. I wanted to get out of there. Staying between John Morton Grace and Jeffrey was too much. As I reached the entrance, Jones had walked up the corridor as far as the door into Section One. Suddenly, he realized that he still wore his cap. He snatched it off too late, for there in wait for him lurked another sentry. He clobbered Jones with a sharp, smart blow to the side of the head. After the guard departed and the blind automatic fury of the impotent moment abated, Jones could not suppress a rueful grin at me as I approached. He stooped to retrieve Crashdive's cigarette from the dust where the impact of the blow had knocked it. He tucked it back behind his ear, shrugged and grinned.

"I can't say I wasn't warned." We stood there working our bare toes in the powdery dust of the corridor. "One of the few pleasures left to us," he said, pointing to the powdery dust sifting between our toes. Then he stood aside to let me enter the section before he did.

"Thanks, Jones, but I guess I'll dissipate a little bit longer." I wriggled my toes vigorously in the dust. Jones went inside.

The corridor ran the length of the building. It was about four feet wide and as tall as the building, perhaps sixteen feet. The building was divided into nine equal parts—four housing sections, the middle unit a *bengo,* then four more housing sections. Forty men lived in each section with ten men on the floor on each side of the door and ten more on platforms built about six feet directly above. Only in the middle of the sections could most men stand erect.

Forty men slept in each section, except, of course, in Section One. There were only thirty-three of us in Section One.

With effort, holding onto the door jamb, I took the two steps up and into Section One.

Hi, Loot," men greeted me.

"Welcome home," some cried and I felt at home again.

Lo! He is risen!" cried Scott who came over and took my ditty bag of tin dishes and my blanket roll. "He hath picked up his pallet and walks!" He tossed my ditty bag to Joe Madison on Upper Right platform and then with a mighty fling and a cry of "timber!" he flipped the blanket roll after the dishes. "Glad you're back, but you don't look too good, Sir. Can I give you a boost up?"

"Thanks, Scott. I can make it. I climbed the ladder to Upper Right. Joe spread my blanket and I stretched out on it.

"It's lonesome up here without you, John."

"It's lonesome out there, too."

We lay in familiar silence. I rolled onto my stomach and surveyed Section One, glad to be home again. Through some odd quirk of Japanese inefficiency, all the survivors of the *U.S.S. Metropole* had always been kept together—we thirty-three men of Section One in Warui. The other 280 men in Warui were from various ships and Army, Navy and Marine units, from merchant vessels and from the air units, a miscellaneous accumulation. But the thirty-three men in Section One had the *Metro* in common.

Not only did Section One have fewer men than the standard forty per room, Upper right had seven fewer men than the other three sleeping areas in the section. Joe Madison, Doctor Larkin and I enjoyed the guilty luxury of having only three of us in the same space each of the other thirty-one sleeping platforms forced to accommodate ten men. When Joe Madison suggested to Captain Watanabe that some equalization should be made, Watanabe's only reply was a vicious rap on Joe's knuckles with his scabbard.

Colonel Holm, USMCR, had shared Section One,

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Upper Right with us. As Senior Officer Present, Colonel Holm was appointed by the Japanese as Prisoner Head of Prisoners. All orders trickled through Colonel Holm. Almost a month had passed since Captain Watanabe appeared one morning and called, "Colonel Holm!"

"Here, Sir"

"Come down, Colonel Holm."

Yes, Sir. Right away, Sir."

"Bring your bed roll, Colonel Holm."

Quickly, the Colonel placed his few belongings on the end of his blanket and began to roll. Then he unrolled it, extracted his tattered copy of Rocks and Shoals—*Courts Martial Procedure*. He handed it to Doctor Larkin. As he rolled his blanket, Colonel Holm said, "You must remember, Doctor, that pure discipline will bring more of these men through alive than anything else. Pure discipline will do it if anything will. It's your responsibility as SOP to maintain discipline in the ranks at all costs. You understand that, Doctor, I'm sure."

Holm tied his blanket with a piece of Japanese straw rope, stuffed his tin dishes into his ditty bag and climbed down the ladder with only a swift and curt nod to Joe and me. The Japanese put him on a truck and drove away and that's all we knew about Colonel Holm's absence.

He was the only *Metro* survivor no longer with the group and, with the possible exception of Doctor Larkin, none of us missed him. We were all curious about him but we did not wish him back.

I stared into the stove well, a brick-lined hole in the center of the floor. In the winter, an inadequate stove fashioned from an oil drum sat in the well and failed to heat the section. The mere thought of winter disturbed me because it recalled Jones's remark, "How many of us will survive the winter?"

Without announcement or preamble, Bill Trona stood up across the well and recited one of his limericks:

"A sexy young lady in Greece
Looked at home when she needed a piece.
While under her brother,
She asked of her mother,
"But how can I bear my own niece?"

Before the hooting laughter ended, the bellow, "Chow Down!" sent our mess detail to the galley to pick up our noon rations. Doctor Larkin came in from his turn at the bath. Before the messmen returned, Zack Brown entered. Nondescript, medium tall, medium everything, Zack could pass for any age between twenty and thirty. Almost all the men loathed him, yet with every entrance, all eyes focused on Zack because of his function. Zack was an office worker and he could type so he had been forced into the Jap office when we were first taken and he never escaped it. Some disliked Zack because he had no time for fools, some because they thought it was not prison to be chained to a typewriter, some because of his sharp tongue. He accepted his status and gave plenty of reasons for dislike. Still, everyone kept on speaking terms with Zack Brown. He was an indispensable channel for communicating official Jap orders before they could publish them. It was cold comfort. There was no compromise with a decree, no escape. But there was a satisfaction in knowing what was coming before it knocked a man down. Manipulating his power wisely, Zack easily defeated the conglomerate hate flung at him.

Pars entered with his bucket of watery *fuki* juice and before he even began to ladle it into the thirty-three bowls lined in the middle of the floor Pars asked, "What's new, Zack?"

Zack ignored him.

"Anything cooking?" came from another.

"What's the word?" someone else called. Zack paid no heed. He climbed the ladder; judging from his actions, Section One might just as well have been empty. Babe took his finger out of his mouth and asked "What's up?" from his corner as Zack passed but Zack merely wrinkled his nose as if he had encountered a bad smell. He went to the far corner and sat down by Jones. Zack conversed in low tones with Jones for a few moments, then moved to the rail, waiting, demanding undivided attention. "Good news for the pious," he said, then mimicking a high-pitched Japanese delivery, "Through the kindness of the Imperial Japanese Army," he paused with infuriating deliberateness, "there will be a personal appearance of Jesus Christ in the prison yard this afternoon."

In the horrified silence, Zack laughed, harsh, short sounds adding to the consternation of most of his audience, many of whom appeared to believe that the walls were about to collapse and punish all of us with sudden annihilation because of Zack's sacrilege.

He turned his back on us suddenly and sat down again by the wall with Jones. "Serve the slop!" he shouted into the silence. Just as the stew and the pittance of rice had been divided into the bowls and the bowls had been passed back to the owners, Kato stuck his head in the door.

Kato was the poorest interpreter we had ever been stuck with. Until Zack began to teach him English in the office in spare moments, Kato knew almost no English. On the other hand, he was the best. Kato possessed a natural kindness, courtesy and friendliness we had never found in an interpreter prior to him. Now he stood in the doorway waiting to be recognized. A. J. Adamaski saw him. Kato handed him a slip of paper and departed with the sheaf still in his hand for the other seven sections of Warui.

A. J. read, "Reverend Hideki Arima will conduct Christian services in the yard this afternoon."

There was no comment.

A. J. read the rest of the slip, "The day shift will assemble at 12:30 for garden work."

"The chiseling bastards, dirty bastards!" Scott said. "Dirty, cheating, lying, word-breaking bastards. Who ever heard of such bullshit? We work nine days and on the tenth day we rest and change shifts. But on the tenth day we work!"

The click of the spoon against his tin bowl was the

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only sound in the room as Zack ate alone. Zack had not had the courage to pass on the last half of the order before it came from the Japs. Zack wasn't so tough.

When Joe took our bowls down to wash them under the only faucet in the barracks, Doctor Larkin cleared his throat. That was his signal to Joe and me that he was about to speak to us. "Who told you to come back to the section?" he asked.

"Nobody. I just felt better today so I came back."

"You know what that does to the count, Lieutenant."

"Yes, sir. But I felt better. I don't like to stay out there between Jeffrey and Grace any longer than I have to. It's bad enough being there when the fever's got me off center."

"Nevertheless, Lieutenant, you go back to the sick room and remain there until you are properly transferred back to Section One."

"But, Doctor . . ."

'Is that clear, Lieutenant?"

"Yes, sir."

When Joe came back from dishwashing, he carried my blanket back to the cell. He sat down on the edge of the platform where I lay and ran his hands through the stubble of hair on his head. "Sometimes I think Doc is the craziest one of the lot of us."

"I'm sure of it. A cold fish. No wonder either. Why in the hell doesn't he ever talk to anyone?"

"Who knows?" Joe said. "Maybe he only knows how to talk to other doctors in prescription Latin."

John Morton Grace's sweet tenor voice, like a boy soprano in a church choir, floated through the cracks in the partition between us:

"Rock-a-bye baby in the tree top, when the wind blows the cradle will rock, when the wind blows the cradle will fall down will come baby cradle and all."

"Grace doesn't know the words," I said.

"And that's important," Joe agreed. "You ought to go over and tell Grace he's not singing it right, John."

I laughed. "That must have sounded pretty stupid. It's just that I used to sing that to my boy and Grace says when the wind blows the cradle will fall when he should say when the bough breaks."

"Pretty silly is right," Joe agreed. "How old is Johnny now?"

"Six in a couple of months," I said. It didn't even hurt very much to think about it any more. For months, years even, at first I almost went crazy thinking about Ellen and Johnny. But a man can only live at a fever pitch of crisis so long, then he adjusts to that pitch and accepts it as normal. All that really happens, I guess, is that the threshold of pain keeps getting higher and higher until it just about requires a mortal wound to cause a man to weep even one tear. Either that or the emotions were simply withering and dying and I only told myself in my mind and with my mind the way I ought to feel without actually feeling that way at all. If I missed them as much as I thought I did, how could I ever go to sleep without thinking about them? Sometimes, the minutiae of living pushed them out of my mind for as much as a whole week at a time. I went to sleep with Joe sitting right there, I guess, because I don't remember him leaving to join the detail of men who had to climb to the top of the mountain where we were clearing the growth away so we could plant a garden eventually.

A gentle rain was falling when I woke up late in the afternoon. Any rain sounded like a lot on that tin roof so I crawled from the sleeping platform to look out the window to find out just how hard it was coming down. It was a heavy sprinkle. I saw Jones standing in the doorway of the barracks with his towel across his shoulder. He seemed to be waiting for a let-up before he made a dash across the corner of the yard to the bath house. I went back to bed and pulled the blanket over my head, disconsolate and discouraged. Rain always did that to us, made us more cold and hungry and so discouraged we sought the only isolation we knew—the privacy of a blanket.

Almost at once, I heard Jeffrey stirring; not even wanting to, I found myself wriggling into position to watch his ordeal. He lifted himself onto the *bengo*, repeated the procedure of warming his legs with the hot urine, then, when he lifted his head for the climb back onto his pallet, he saw Jones through his window. With tremendous effort, Jeffrey forced himself to a crouching stance and inch by inch edged his way across the floor to the door. He opened the door and when the rain hit him, I saw his skin twitch in large splotchy sections like an animal's hide.

"Jones!" he piped.

"Get out of the rain!" I could hear Jones shouting as he ran across the yard. Then he appeared in the door, lifted Jeffrey's lank and shivering bones and carried him quickly back to the pallet where he tucked the blanket snugly and tenderly about him. "What's wrong?" Jones kept saying. "What's wrong, Jeff?"

"Nothing," the answer finally came between gasps.

"Then what are you doing out of bed?" Indignation made Jones sound severe, even to me.

"Don't be sore," Jeff pleaded weakly.

"I'm not sore, Jeff," Jones said softly.

"Would you rather stand in the rain than look at me?" Jeff asked.

"Of course not. You shouldn't be out of bed, that's all." Jones lied and must have known he lied. Standing in the rain would be preferable to looking at Jeffrey.

"What's new?" Jeff asked and closed his eyes from sheer weariness.

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"Nothing."

"Still mining?"

"Nine days out of ten."

"I keep track," Jeff said. "It always rains on the tenth day."

"Yes, nine days we labor and on the tenth day it rains," Jones agreed.

"The mine's taking the life out of you," Jeff said.

"I'm still navigating under my own power," Jones said. "I didn't mean that the way it sounded, Jeff," he apologized. "I just meant . . ."

"That's OK. You're getting awful thin, Alex." It sounded strange to hear anyone call Jones Alex.

"Not as thin as most guys."

I wondered where Jeffrey found the guts to talk about anyone being thin for he was probably the thinnest man still living. There was a long tedious lull during which I could hear John Morton Grace humming that interminable lullaby. Jones was straining to catch it, too.

"Too bad you have to be so close to him," Jones said.

"No, I like his company. I wish he was in the next cell. It's friendly in the night to know that he's near. Sometimes before John Grace got put in there I used to wake up in the nights thinking that I was the only man in the whole world and I was lonely. Now I know there are at least two of us."

"Who takes care of you now?" Jones asked.

"Doctor Larkin stops in every morning to look me over. One of the cooks brings me my food and whichever one it is washes me up and empties the *bengo* for me every day."

"Shaves you, too?" Jones was groping for conversation.

"Yes."

"That's good."

"Not so good. They don't do as smooth a job as you used to do."

Jones flushed all over. I could see him turning red from where I peered guiltily through my crack. I remembered that he used to go each day to the bathhouse and get a bucket of water to take to Jeffrey's cell where he washed him and then on the tenth day he would wash his bedding and anything else he had dirtied. Jeffrey never had any clothes. He had not worn clothes at all since he had been put to bed for keeps. I knew how Jones felt, he and Jeff had said all there was to say and the pain of watching his friend die was too much to bear. Anyone could shave and bathe a man.

"Can you find me another razor blade?" Jeff asked. "The only one I have left is dull and one corner is broken off."

"I'll get you one," Jones said.

I wondered where. No one in Warui had seen a new razor blade for months, nor soap, nor toilet paper, nor . . .

In another lull, John Morton Grace hummed *Rock a bye baby* loudly, happily. Jeff said, "Hungry?"

"No more than usual." But I saw Jones look at the three covered bowls on the crude table. His fingers tightened on his knees as if he fought to prevent himself from snatching at the bowls. "Where does that fancy stuff come from?"

"Kato brings me stuff almost every day. I don't know where he gets it. Go ahead and eat it." Jeff urged. "If you don't the cooks will. That's why they bother to take care of me, to eat my garbage."

"You can't eat bread and butter?" Jones cried in astonishment.

"Nothing tastes good, seems like only rice will stay down at all."

"You ought to eat it anyway."

"Why, Jones?" After a long pause, Jeff repeated, "Give me one good reason why."

There was no answer, only the steady rhythm of the rain, heavier now. Then the rain stopped abruptly leaving only *Rock a bye baby*, a barely audible caress on the eardrums, as all there was.

Jones stood up, pulling on the ends of his towel with both hands. "Guess I better take my bath," he said apologetically.

"Jones . . ."

"Yes."

"Jones . . ."

"I better go now so you can rest."

"I rest twenty-four hours every day." His voice was low, flat, almost nothing. He closed his eyes. When he opened them, he simultaneously lifted himself on his elbows and cried hoarsely, "Don't begrudge me a few minutes!"

Jones sat down on the edge of the platform, forced his friend flat on his back again. "It's not that, Jeff. You don't really think that do you?"

"You can't stand the sight of me!" Jeff screamed in a high, thin voice.

The expression on Jones's surprised face told me that was right. "No," he protested, "it's just that . . ." His voice trailed away.

I knew what he must be thinking. To all of us Jeffrey was a symbol of our own impending ends. It was like watching himself die. Jones could no longer bear the agony of it. Avoid the dying. Forget the dead. No alternative exists. Any other course brings death nearer, racing for a man, reminding him, touching him, ending him. Avoid the dying. Forget the dead. What else could a man do?

"Alex," Jeffrey broke the long silence. "Alex, I . . ."

"Yes?" Jones's perplexity at the sound of hearing his own name registered clearly on his face. No one in prison ever called him Alex. Then after sorting that out, fumbling, trying to be kind, he added, "Yes, Bob." It must have sounded as strange to his ears as it did to mine.

Jeff placed one spidery hand on Jones's knee and said fiercely, "I love you, Alex."

"I love you, too, Jeff." The Jeff came easier than the unfamiliar Bob. "You're a good friend. I love you, too."

"I won't let you confuse the issue," he lifted his head and shoulders from his log of straw. "I love you with

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all my heart and all my mind and all my might." His hand slid upward along Jones's thigh, groped for his crotch.

Finally the awful sick look faded from Jones's face. He took Jeff's hand in one of his and forced it back under the blanket. Then he held his head in his hands and rested his elbows on his knees.

I dropped my head on my own pallet, determined not to look back through the knot hole and the crack. I pushed my fingers in my ears and closed my eyes, resolved to remain there until Jones left. Jeffrey talked when I took my hands from my ears and looked again.

"Now you know. Now you hate me," he said.

"No."

"You must understand. I'll do anything for you, Alex. Anything."

"I understand." Jones still held his head in his hands. His voice was muffled.

"Now it's in the open. We both know."

"You only think you love me."

"I know about the birds and the bees, men and women, too. I'm not a child of six. I mean I love you." He coughed. "I'm not an innocent . . ."

"None of us are."

"You're a fine man, Alex. Clean and honest and intelligent."

"Don't say it."

"I think I love your body most of all, Alex. I used to watch you in the bath house and . . ."

"For the love of Christ, Jeff, don't say any more," Jones pleaded.

"Why not?"

"Nothing can be gained." He stroked his friend's hand which he had been clutching like a bundle of dried twigs. "You'll only regret it later."

"There won't be any later for me. Don't you suppose that I know that?"

"You think it over. You'll feel different about it tomorrow."

"What do you suppose I've been thinking about? Lying here hour after hour. Day after day. Month after month." His expression remained the same grotesque mask but his voice was reproachful. "I thought that you would understand, Alex."

"I think I do."

"No you don't! You're talking words."

"Living this kind of life for so long. Being young and without any women . . ."

"You don't understand at all, Alex." Jeff turned his face away.

"We can't deny our dreams, Jeff." He closed his eyes and his jaw tightened into a hard line.

"This is no dream for me."

"I dreamed about Scott last week."

"He's healthy!" Jeff accused. "I'm too bony!"

"No."

"It's true. You want him but you don't want . . ."

"I don't want Scott, Jeff."

"You do!"

"I don't!" Jones stood up. "I don't."

"I'm twenty-two years old, Alex. I never had a woman. Now I never will." His voice became shrill with anxiety and with hopelessness of his situation. "I lied like all the others about it, pretending to be experienced, and wanting, God knows how I wanted a woman, even a whore would have been all right"; tears began to course down his face and Jeff paid no attention, "but I was afraid and mixed up inside about being clean and decent for a wife someday. And now I'll die without ever knowing anything about it all."

Jones patted his friend comfortingly. "Now I think I understand, Jeff. Don't be ashamed."

"I'm not ashamed!" he cried with astonishing firmness. "Don't even say that."

"It's just that . . ."

"You don't love me."

"Not that way."

"What other way is there? If you love, you love. You'd do anything for someone you really loved."

"I have a theory . . ."

"Theories no longer interest me."

"I must explain."

Bitterly, Jeff cried, "Explain then!"

"Everything that happens to us takes something away from us, a little piece of us is rubbed away by every new experience. We think it brings us knowledge but all that it really does is take away our innocence. It brings us nearer to nothing by invisible inches. When enough things have happened, all the wonder is gone and then we are dead inside."

"What a boring idea."

"No, it's . . ."

"If you must analyze everything first . . ."

"It's the way I am," Jones said simply. "That's the way I am." He rubbed his forehead. "I'm afraid of what I might lose."

"I have nothing to lose," Jeff replied.

They sat there in bitter silence for long moments. When Jones began to speak, Jeff lifted his frail arm and stopped him with a gesture as final as the crack of doom. "You better go now, Alex." Jones walked to the door and opened it. "I'll try to find some new blades for you this afternoon," he said prosaically.

"Alex," Jeff called after him, "don't hate me, no matter what happens, don't hate me because I understand and I'll always love you for being what you are. Now go."

After the door closed, Jeff threw the blanket off from his legs and lay there for a moment. I could count his ribs easily and, where his stomach should have been, there was just a great cavity he was so fleshless. As he lifted his head, I dropped back to my pallet, finally able to rip my gaze from the crack. I lay there stunned by what I had heard and pitying Jones, for the decision had been forced on him; either way he had been lost. "Like Jug and his cap on the threshold," I thought. There was no denying it, most of the men wondered and wrestled with their consciences just as Jeff did.

The only difference was time, most could wrestle the problem and never be forced to a final decision. A few, Mother Carey's Chickens, resolved it to their own satisfaction. If they suffered at all, it was in their con-

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sciences. Fellow prisoners did not shun them, nor castigate them, merely ragged them.

In the barracks, in the showers, in the mines and in the yards, food and sex monopolized the conversation, almost excluding everything else. Joe and I kidded each other about having more than a paternal interest in Babe Trent. Instead of the sex urge becoming less and less until it finally disappeared, the hungrier and skinnier and closer to death we moved, the more important sex seemed to become, almost as if the primal, basic urge to beget and survive had been distilled to the apparent surface cause and end.

Perhaps that is why the problem was not quite so crucial for a few like myself who had a son already. We would survive into an unknown future even if we left Warui in one of the little ash boxes.

But time was significant. And time had run out for Robert Jeffrey. Time forced his hand. Recalling him, it registered with me that I had not heard the usual small sounds which accompanied his use of the *bengo*. Through the crack, I saw him still reclining there naked, his arms at his sides and his hands folded across his crotch. Then I yelled, leaped from my pallet, dashed out the door and over to his.

I was too late.

Robert Jeffrey had sliced both wrists deep and sure with a razor blade still on his thigh where he had put it. Then he had clasped his hands and let the blood drain into the cavity where his stomach should have been. It was a red, red pool.

I fought my way out against the tide of prisoners attracted by my yells. I saw Jones come from the bath house, get the news from another man and stumble blindly toward Jeff's cell. By the time I reached him, his tears had blinded him. He stood there numbly, mumbling to himself, over and over again, "With that dull blade, with that dull blade."

★

I sent Joe for my blanket and even though Doc Larkin protested, I refused to go back to the little room. To punish me, I supposed, Doctor Larkin put my name on the work detail for my regular shift in the morning. I was grateful to Doctor Larkin.

We had *fuki* for supper and the bitter, hollow-stemmed plant floated listlessly in the clean, unseasoned cup of water in which it had been boiled. I watched it hopelessly. To eat it meant that my rice, too, would be lost for *fuki* reacted like a dose of salts. Across the well of the section, I watched Scott chomp a mouthful distastefully. "Who wants this slop?" he asked. Luke thrust his bowl over and Scott dumped.

"I'm just like Scott," Jones said. "*Fuki* is a rotten symbol to both of us but Scott defies the idea while I grind away hoping there may be some shred of nourishment in it to ward off the inevitable just a little while longer." Suddenly he stopped talking, a look of pain crossed his face. Jones pursed his lips and blew. Something richocheted from the wall, bounced on the floor and rolled off the platform onto the floor below.

"Tooth?" Zack inquired.

"Cinder." Jones shivered all over. "What a sensation to bite down on one." He shook his head.

"It'll be a tooth one of these times," Zack said. "That'll be the crowning, exquisite touch of agony, a perpetually aching stump of a tooth."

Luke took the hand carved wooden dice from their shelf. They rolled high point to decide who should wash dishes. Luke rolled a four. "Pair of deuces again," he complained. "That's all I ever get." He watched Scott roll a ten, Jones a six and Zack a seven. "Might as well cut out the bother of rolling. I always wash them anyway."

"I washed them last night," Zack protested.

"Yeah, but I've washed them two thirds of the time."

"They're your dice."

"Unlucky with dice, lucky in love," Scott added.

"I sure got a heap of loving coming." Luke took the bowls and climbed down the ladder. I thought he enjoyed doing the dishes. The complaints were just a coverup for Luke's obvious feeling that the other members of that quartet merely tolerated him. He didn't seem to belong.

"Weeds!" Scott exploded to break the long silence which followed Luke's departure. "There won't be five of us left to tell the story by spring."

"You're so right," Jones agreed.

Pars crouched beside them. "That's right. We'll all be dead by spring. It's time you guys begin thinking about the things you done! God remembers and he'll shore fix you."

"Go away," Scott pleaded. "Go read your Bible."

"Yore the guys that needs to read the Bible. Ya'll shore find out when ya die!"

Scott half rose to his feet. "Get the hell away from me, Pars!"

"Ya'll shore find out," Pars repeated his warning. "You'll be sorry for all the stuff ya done. God seen ya every time. He remembers when ya tore pages of the Bible for cigarette papers. And using the Good Book for toilet paper; Y'll all be sorry you sinned like that. Y'all just wait and see. Just you wait . . . "

"Get out! Get away!" Scott leaped to his feet. Like a pugnacious bantam rooster, he faced Pars, irritated to the point where his pain could be read off his face. "I can't understand why God put so much of the spirit into such a weak vessel as you."

"You'll sure find . . ."

"Get some news!" Scott barked. "Go tune in your radio!"

Pars changed instantly. He returned to his own spot on the platform and crouched by the wall as if concealing something between his knees. His habitual, uncomprehending stare faded. He leaned forward with

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one ear close to his hand as he tried to tune in a station clearly, oblivious of surroundings, immersed in his secret.

"You ought to be ashamed, Scott," Jones cried. "Don't try to make him crazier than he is."

"Why not?"

"Scott!"

"You want to listen to his line of crap all the time? If Pars has flipped, there's nothing I can do about it. If he's pulling some kind of an act, I don't give a damn. Pretending to have a radio! Christ Almighty! If Pars paid a little more attention to the here and now and less to the hereafter, he'd be a lot better off. And so would I."

Luke dashed in from washing dishes, spotted Pars and asked, "He really think he's got a radio there?"

"Who knows what he thinks?" Zack asked.

"Or if?" Scott added.

"Do you think so, Jones?" Luke asked.

"You know as much about it as I do. He's been tuning in for a month now. From the way he looks, I'd say Pars thinks he has a radio and is talking to his mother back in Louisiana just the way he claims to do."

"What if he is nuts?" Scott was matter of fact about it. "It won't hurt anybody. He never tunes it in when we're working. Only at nights. I think he's better off crazy than he is sane. Gives him something to do and keeps him from driving other people crazy. Without the radio, it'd only be a matter of time until he forced somebody to beat his brains out anyway."

Doctor Larkin stared across the well, trying not to appear interested. The nerves along his jawline throbbed and twitched. He looked away and out the window when he noticed that I watched him. Then he left the section and went outside.

It seemed that static had begun to interfere with Pars's radio reception. He turned the knob and put his ear even closer to the imaginary box. A disgruntled expression clouded his face. He turned the knob again. Jones moved closer to him. "Having trouble, Pars?" he asked kindly.

"Shush!"

"Bad reception?"

"Just gettin' her tuned in good."

"Who you getting tonight?"

"Been talkin' to Ma, but she said God wanted to say something to me. Caint seem to pick Him up very good though. Guess the devil's sending all this goldarned static to keep me from hearing right." He turned the knob just a hairsbreadth right, then gradually sank back against the wall, the bliss again with him. His lips moved in wordless, soundless conversation with the voice of God emanating from his eerie radio for his private guidance.

Jones passed his hand slowly in front of Parson's wide eyes. He repeated the action. He got up slowly, thoughtfully.

"What about it, Doctor Jones?" Scott taunted.

"That's a trance. Pars isn't clever enough to fake one. Pars thinks he's talking to God."

"What'll we be like when we flip our lids?" Scott demanded. "How'll we act?" The entire section became quiet and it seemed to me that every man searched his heart for a clue about himself.

"Here's an appropriate one I've just this minute finished," Trona finally yelled. "Give a listen to one of my very best:

"A circumcised seraph from Mecca
Found great delight in his pecca.
As he played with the thing,
He spilled sperm on his wing,
But cried, "When God's not about, what the hecca!"

Pars Samuelson screamed. "See what happens? See what happens? Godless men!" Pars yelled. "Godless men! Fergettin 'bout God." His wild gaze came to rest on Scott. "Fergit 'bout God and God'll ferget about you. God's punishin' all of us. Punishin' us cause we forgot about Him!" His voice crowded the Section.

"Parson!" Scott shouted, both angry and afraid.

Pars did not hear.

"Pars," Jones said quietly. "Pars, do you hear me? Can you hear me?"

Pars only glared at Scott.

I climbed down the ladder with Joe behind me. We tried to get up on the platform on their side but the men who could get down without going past Pars were clambering down it. "Listen to me, Pars," Jones pleaded. "It's no use. He's got it bad. Get Larkin, somebody. Maybe he can bring him out of it."

"Let's take him outside," I said. "Maybe the fresh air will do it."

"Let's get out of here, shall we, Pars?" Jones was gentle, persuasive. "Let's go outside." He propelled Pars slowly toward the ladder.

"What?" Pars gasped.

"Let's go out."

"Let's go out," Pars repeated after him like an uncomprehending child. Then, "Let's go out" he shouted. His eyes flashed about the room like swords of fire. "Out! Out! Out into the wilderness." The plaintive cry of a soul in despair. "Out into the wilderness, into the wilderness . . . "

He balked at the ladder. Zack joined Jones in urging, gently pushing, prodding. I stood below waiting for him to start down. "The trials of Job!" Pars thundered. Pars came down the ladder like a robot. With Jones on one side and Zack on the other, we led him outside into the yard. "Hell's fire and brimstone," he shouted.

In the corridor, Pars shook himself and flung their hands from him. "Hell's fire!"

"Everything'll be OK, Pars," Jones tried to reassure him. "Let's walk a little. Come on," he urged, "Let's go."

"Let's go," Pars agreed, "into the wilderness, into the wilderness."

Crashdive approached, menacing. We halted. "Crazy, crazy," Jones explained. Crashdive stopped in his tracks, apparently believing the explanation to be a ruse.

"Into the wilderness," Pars roared and the violence of his efforts to shake Zack and Jones loose, startled the guard so that he leaped back and fell. He crawled

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away, leaped to his feet and raced to the guardhouse.

Doctor Larkin ran from it to us. "Back inside with him," he said after a quick look into Pars' eyes. "Inside!" His agitation had seemed to me at first to be with us for interfering with a patient but then I realized that he was trying to hurry him back into the barrack before the Japs returned. Doctor Larkin scrambled up the ladder and returned almost instantly with a hypo needle. We forced Pars inside. Doctor Larkin plunged the needle in quickly and emptied it. Pars began to subside at once. Doctor Larkin climbed the ladder and replaced his needle quickly under his bedroll. Then he came back down. "Stretch him out there." Doctor Larkin pointed to the floor.

Captain Watanabe came in just as we finished getting Pars down. Crashdive followed him. "What is it? What is it?"

"A bad dream, a nightmare, bad dream, bad dream," Doctor Larkin explained again and again until Captain Watanabe and Crashdive retreated to the guardhouse.

Pars slept heavily.

Doctor Larkin returned to Upper Right, sat on his locker box and stared out the window into the black night.

Joe and I stretched out on our blankets. Our heads were near the edge of the platform. Both of us watched Pars asleep. Joe finally said, "It *was* a clever limerick."

Then Bill Trona again stood up on the platform across the way and said, "I know I'll never be able to spark an equal incident, but give a listen anyway:

A precocious young sinner named Alice
Caught her brother manhandling his phallus.
Asked this curious Venus,
"Is it your hand or your penis
On which you are building the callus?"

During the laughter, Ben Lucas left the section followed in a few minutes by Milton Carey. Joe asked, "Where in God's name do you suppose they find the necessary privacy?"

"Only one possibility."

"One?"

"Of course, the *bengo*," I said.

"You're right," Joe agreed, "but it certainly disproves silly theories about romantic settings being necessary."

Trona stood up again.

"A fraudulent salesman named Lear
Swindled housewives far and near,
For he'd promise his tail
In exchange for a sale
And then he'd explain, "I'm a queer."

After the first gust of laughter, Doctor Larkin stood up and moved to the edge of the platform. When the raucous laughter and dirty cracks continued, Larkin climbed down the ladder and stood under the dangling forty-watter until all the sounds of life were gone. Then he took Pars's pulse before he climbed back up the ladder, again stepped over Joe and me and sat down on his locker.

Beneath the other platform, the two Marines Buck and Homer sat by the window. Buck strummed chords on the rickety guitar he had acquired through some black marketing trade back in 1942 when that was still possible. Buck guarded the box with his life and played it every time opportunity arose. Homer sang a sad lament as Buck chorded.

"If I only had a match
All my cares I'd soon forget.
If I only had a match
If I had a cigarette."*

While they sang, A. J. Adamaski, CPO, sat upright against the wall with his legs straight before him and a hand on his thigh. Eyes closed, A. J. kept time by patting his thighs. His lips moved soundlessly along with Homer's singing.

Next to A. J., the colorful quartet—Red, Green, Black, and White, took up their interminable bridge game with the homemade deck of cards six inches thick.

Right on schedule, the *fuki* for supper began to cramp my stomach. With great effort, I descended the ladder and left the section, en route to the *bengo* up the corridor. All eight booths were full. I had to wait my turn. I had the laces on my Jap pants untied at the waist before I got inside a stall. I squatted over the square hole in the floor. A nauseous stench filled the air. Beneath me, the huge concrete tank was covered with a living scum of maggots.

We had had no toilet paper for months. I took sheets of Bible paper from my shirt pocket. In a sudden silence when I stood up, I recognized the sounds of sex coming from the next stall. Half-sick from the stench, I undid the sliding latch and stepped out to secure my trousers. Thoughts of Jeffrey eroded whatever commitment I had to uphold moral codes. I returned to Section One.

I leaned over Pars to examine him for a moment. He seemed to be all right, sleeping soundly. When I stood up, my head whirled dizzily. I rested my forehead against the top rung of the ladder. As my head began to clear, a conversation came to me from beneath the blanket inches away from my ears.

A voice throbbing for enthusiasm said, "Now take chocolate pie," then paused as if to consider its own suggestion before continuing, "Man, I could eat a dozen of them right now."

I recognized Gladhand Jackson's voice.

"A dozen of them," Gladhand reiterated.

"Me too," A. J. agreed. After a pause, he added in solemn honesty, "Two dozen."

"Chocolate pie!" Gladhand repeated in hushed tones.

For a few minutes they lay there in silent contemplation of the unattainable pastry. And so did I. I visualized them just out of the oven and sitting on Ellen's kitchen table to cool. Then I shook myself to break its strangle hold on my stomach. A man does think with his stomach. Before I could move away, the voices resumed.

"Plenty of chocolate and plenty of sugar for me,"

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Gladhand said. "I like them heavy." A moment of silence, then, "Smooth but heavy."

A.J. differed. "Not too much chocolate. That makes them bitter."

"You can put in more sugar."

"Too much chocolate makes them black."

"Black! Schmack! Who cares?"

"I like a nice brown color."

"I don't give a damn what color it is just so there is plenty of chocolate. You can always mix in a little more sugar."

Gladhand paused in awful contemplation. I felt an urge to whisper, "Don't forget the whipped cream!" But the sudden realization that theirs was a private dream stopped me.

A.J. resumed in tones of religious fervor, "Not a Navy pie, not a bakery pie, but Mother's pie."

"Yeah, Mother's pie."

"I think my mother makes the best chocolate pie in the whole world," Gladhand declared proudly.

"No," A. J. contradicted, "I think my mother makes the best."

"Now just a minute," Gladhand interrupted with sincere logic, "you've never tasted my mother's pie. Don't be stupid!"

A.J. resumed in tones of religious fervor, "Not a jerked the blanket off both of them and glared at his only friend in a cold and growing fury. "My mother makes the best chocolate pie in the whole world, the best in the whole damned world," he said in a low and deadly monotone. "And she didn't raise a stupid son, you sorry son of a bitch."

Gladhand swung a haymaker from a sitting position and clipped the end of the word off neatly. Both leaped to their feet, swinging and cursing. Fists swung wildly. Amid the scuffling and the puffing, came an occasional muttering, "Chocolate pie!"

The Section came to its feet. Those topside spread themselves thinly along the wall by the window to make room for the whirling fighters.

"Break it up," Jones pleaded.

"Leave 'em alone," Buck advised.

"Fight to the death," Scott screamed.

"You just shut your big mouth for once," Black glared at Scott.

Scott's beady eyes became mere slits. "Shut your own! Wanna make something of it?"

Terse phrases seemed about to turn the private fight into a brawl. Doctor Larkin stood beside me shouting for me to clear the ladder. Joe Madison climbed right over me, got between Gladhand and A. J. and halted the fight.

I slunk out the door and down the passageway to stand on the leeward side of the building. A light rain had begun to fall. I wondered what in the hell we had come to when the ingredients for pie could start a fight between good friends.

I got cold and wet and shivery.

And, God in His Heaven, how I wished for a chocolate pie. A dozen! By God, two dozen!

★

Japanese buglers insulted music each time they put the bugle to their lips. The blasphemous sounds routed me from my blanket to which I had retreated after my miserable, self-pitying vigil in the rain. Still cold and wearier than ever, I rose slowly, folded my blanket, donned my Jap uniform jacket and buttoned it, then ran the comb through my hair before I climbed down the ladder from Upper Right.

"Get squared away for inspection," A. J. thundered. Being the senior enlisted man in the section, A. J. was automatically Section Leader. All leaped to obey. Blankets had to be aligned in neat rows along each wall. Gear on shelves received final pats. Because it was his turn, Zack swept the floor with a bunch of twigs and leaves tied to a stick. Every piece of lint was collected. Every scrap of anything was hustled from sight. The seldom-used tincan ashtrays were polished like old silver. Every piece of clothing, every rag snatched from every nail or line. The stove well was dusted. A. J. inspected the results of the cleanup with a skill developed from long practice and made thorough by the spur of an occasional blow from the inspecting officers.

"Line up," A. J. warned. "They're coming in the barracks."

The men on the lower floor formed a line: each man stood in his sleeping spot. The men from the upper platforms formed a second line in front of them. Each wore his complete Japanese uniform with the identification number pinned precisely above the pocket on the right breast. All faces were clean. All hair combed.

"Stand by!" Captain Larkin shouted his warning from the passageway. Each of us checked ourselves one more time. A. J. circled the room hastily. He sought a misplaced hair or a foot a quarter of an inch out of line.

"*Kutski*!" A. J. roared at the sound of the inspection party dragging swords into the barracks. Each man became as rigid as a shaft of steel, head thrown far back, hands thrust straight to the side and pressed tightly against trouser legs.

Doctor Larkin stepped into the section preceding the Japs to make a preliminary check. Tall and gangly, Doctor Larkin always looked to me as if he had been assembled promiscuously from spare parts in a junkyard for human bodies. He had changed surprisingly little during our three and a half years in Oriental prisons. His clothes were still remnants of his own, still clean, still a matching Navy uniform. His shoes shone. His face was thin but it had always been so. He was austere, aloof and quite alone in his prison. He completed his inspection without once varying his slow pace, his isolated reserve.

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Eyeballs gestured to A. J. who reported in Japanese. "*San ju san mei*!" (Thirty-three men)—there was more to it than that but A. J. had never mastered the unfamiliar syllables and simply mumbled gibberish in a tone not even the Japs bothered to try to decipher. He finished the report by shouting, "Bunko!"—his version of the Japanese command *bango* (count off), in a roar which pleased the Japs and perhaps explained their leniency with A. J.'s failure to master the other part of the routine report.

The men of the section counted off in a staccato delivery of numbers from which final vowels were dropped, "*Ich, ni, san, chi, go, rok, . . .*"

After the report, Eyeballs circled the room, a one man parade, scrutinizing every finger and thumb, every pile of clothes, every blanket, every hair on every head, the alignment of every number. He peeked into the stove well, climbed halfway up each ladder to inspect the upper platforms. If not thorough, Eyeballs was nothing. He finally came to attention in front of A. J., saluted, and stalked from the room trailing his sword and retinue behind.

"At ease," A. J. whispered. He turned to each row for an instant with a faint smile of congratulation for one and all. One more inspection without a blow being struck. We relaxed where we stood, listening to the shuffle of the boots dragging in and out of one section after another from one to eight. A quarter of an hour after they left Section One, we snapped to attention as the party passed our door on its way out of the barracks. Only when Captain Larkin shouted, "Carry On!" from the passageway did we break ranks and return to our private spots.

Joe and I climbed up and rolled out our blankets. He then went outside to get a breath of fresh air but I stretched out to rest with my head at the edge of the platform. I watched the men as I did each night before sleep came to me.

Zack, Scott, Jones and Luke sat on the floor with their feet in the stove well. A. J. gave them a match. Every man's nostrils sensed the first puff of the smoke as Zack inhaled deeply and blew toward the ceiling. But only Babe Trent reacted overtly.

Babe crawled down the ladder and crouched at Zack's elbow like a begging dog. The cigarette was half gone. "A drag, Zack?" he whined.

Without speaking, without glancing toward him, Zack took another cigarette from his pocket and lit it from the butt. He handed the butt to Babe. "Shove off!" he barked.

Babe hesitated long enough to sneak a drag.

"Shove off, or I'll jam the hot end of that butt up your ass!"

Babe dashed to the ladder and disappeared like a frightened squirrel into a tree.

"You should have kept this one for tomorrow," Luke complained.

"And put up with his whining then, too?" Zack took a drag and handed the hot, moist black butt to Scott.

The colorful quartet stood by the well while the other four finished the cigarette which had been inserted in Scott's charred bamboo holder. Green held a full pack of Jap issue cigarettes, the ones which came in a tan package with a design of the rising sun on it.

"How'd ja swing the pack?" Luke asked.

"Sold a ration of rice. We sold one ration and divided the other three between us. We could hardly tell any was gone. It's a good deal."

"That's for sure," Scott agreed. "Who was the sucker?"

The quartet clammed up.

"Secret, eh?"

"Yeah, a secret. We're going to sell one ration every day."

"Say that is a good deal," Scott exclaimed. "We oughta try it." He grinned at the consternation of the four. "You ought to be able to find out who's paying a pack of ration weeds for a bowl of rice, Zack."

"Zack should'a kept that butt he gave Babe," Luke brooded.

"We're rid of him now, Luke," Zack ended the matter. "Let's smoke this one in peace." They each had another short puff. The bamboo holder was hot as a live coal. Luke got the final drag and pulled the hot ashes through the holder and burned his tongue.

"You should have give us a light," Green said.

"Here, take a light off this," Luke thrust the smouldering holder into his hand.

Green puffed and the cigarette glowed.

As the first four vacated it, the colorful quartet sat down in the well.

Grinning sardonically, Zack held his friends aside while Babe scrambled down the ladder and took up his post at Green's elbow.

The dangling light bulb burned all night to facilitate sentries' bunk checks. It gave a dim, flickering glow at best when I wanted light. Now it seemed to glow brightly, taunting me, a grim reminder of the innate animosity of inanimate objects. I forced my lids closed, then became aware of Homer crooning softly to himself under his blanket. Against my will, I strained to catch the familiar, maddening words:

I went down to Old Joe Clark's
Haint goin' there no more
Cause he slept on the very best bed
And I slept on the floor.
I went down to Old Joe Clark's
Found him sick in bed,
Stuck my finger down his throat
And pulled out a chicken's head.
I went down to Old . . ."

"For the love of Christ, Homer, shut up!"

"Aw, Zack, I'm only . . ."

"Don't argue, shithead! Shut up! You're supposed to be sleeping."

"Aw, Zack . . ."

"Jam it!"

The section seemed quiet for a few minutes after Homer stopped singing. Then the night noises battered my eardrums.

Pars grated his teeth until he gave a massive grunt

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and I knew that Scott had again gouged him vindictively in the ribs. Pars moaned.

"Roll over," Scott commanded. Pars rolled, completing the turn as a top spins on a pin point of space without touching the man on either side of him.

A. J.'s snores, measured and full-bodied blasts, rose above the other sounds. I fitted my breathing to the rhythm of his snores, finally dozed off.

I woke up for an urgent *bengo* run. Joe was sleeping in his blanket beside me. When I returned and stretched out again on the unyielding floor, someone coughed beneath me, a protracted, high-pitched agony torn from the bottom of his lungs and ending in a hacking and coughing punctuated by spitting. Where had he flung the phlegm? On his bunkmate's feet?

The sections were so narrow. Ten men could not sleep with their heads at the edge of the platform to get the most air possible. Ten bodies barely fitted in the space alternating head to foot. Each Tenth Day night one half slept with heads on the edge and the other half with heads at the inner wall. The next Tenth Day night, everyone changed ends. On the nine days in between, only half of us slept at one time.

A man across the well groaned, passed gas in a series of rapid farts which successively diminished in violence, then sighed contentedly and was heard no more.

"A Cardinal bicycle with a broken rear wheel . . ." Babe left the sentence dangling.

"Inconsiderate bastard," Zack muttered. It was the same thing every night, Babe never finished his sleep-talking sentences.

The next time I woke up for a *bengo* run, Scott and Jones peered out the window on Upper Left. They listened intently. Scott's lips moved as he counted to himself. Jones drummed on his naked thigh with his hand. I realized that they were calculating the time the guards required to make their rounds.

★

The blasting bugle roused us before daylight. After tea, we fell out in the yard, were counted, recounted and counted again, then marched over the drawbridge to the edge of the mountain, formed again on the little road that ran the length of the valley and slogged to the end of the valley where the mineshaft gaped like a cold, hungry mouth.

Crashdive turned us over to the mine officials after counting us only one time. A tall fat Japanese official, a civilian in a baggy-kneed brown suit with raveled cuffs on the coat, dismissed Crashdive with a casual wave of his hand. He walked along in front of the first file counting quickly, moving his lips as he did so. Then he made a motion toward a group of Koreans—conscripted they claimed but from the way some of them acted we imagined that they were pretty well sold on the Emperor's policies.

The Koreans neglected to count us at all as they divided us into small groups. Each Korean took his group to the shaft and each man drew a belt with batteries and a helmet with a light from the *denki* shop. Crashdive and I brought up the tail end.

A narrow-gauge railbed ran down the center of the muddy, sloping tunnel. A live wire dangled overhead. Every hundred yards, a dim bulb softened the shadows a little. Seepage and sweat made the walls clammy. At the bottom of the long, steep slope, we congregated, then began the trek through water up to our ankles to get to the vein we were working, eighteen hundred yards from the bottom of the entrance shaft.

We were exhausted by the time we reached the wide spot in the tunnel where we left our little pine boxes with the rice ration for our lunch. Our heads already rattled from the roar and vibrations of the power plant. We faced ten hours of labor before we could even begin the two-hour hike to get back to Warui. Chilled to the bone from the walk through the mud and water, I joined a group to swing a pickaxe for awhile to get my blood circulating and to get warm.

I got my eye on that grinning Korean we called Cowboy and joined his group. Cowboy led us down a long side tunnel then up a long old ladder into our work chamber. He was lazy and friendly and delighted by an interminable discussion of American movies. His crew, among them, Jones, Scott and Luke, bunched around the grinning little man.

Scott slapped his hips and wiggled his thumbs as he pointed his index finger at Cowboy and shot him with a quick draw.

Cowboy doubled over with laughter. Then he imitated Scott's act.

"Tom Mix," Scott cried, repeating this action.

"Tom Mis, Tom Mis," Cowboy echoed. Then he slapped his hands against each other and his thigh to imitate the sound of a galloping horse. He had saved the crew a million man-hours of work. On those rare occasions when the supply of pictures and stars ran out, this simple act repeated and repeated endlessly prolonged our excuse to sit on the rocks around Cowboy. Unless a guard came by to check, the crew worked only enough to keep warm.

Scott enfolded Luke amorously. "Garbo."

Cowboy shrieked with glee.

"Jack Hoxie!" Jones questioned.

"Yes, yes, yes, Jack Hoxie," Cowboy recognized the name of that all-but-forgotten western actor. He slapped his thighs with glee.

"Can't someone remember some new actors for a change," Scott said. "I'm getting pretty tired of these myself."

"Roy Rogers?" Luke asked again.

Cowboy stared blankly.

"Trigger?" Luke persisted. "Roy Rogers? Trigger?"

No recognition from Cowboy. A little hurt and a little perplexed Luke failed to understand this lack of appreciation for his own favorite movie star. Every day Luke tried again, every day, Jones patiently explained that the movies were very old before they got to Korea. "Think of the first movie you ever saw, maybe you'll hit him with it."

"Ken Maynard, have we tried him today?"

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"Not today. Try Ken again," Jones said.

"Me know Ken Maynard," Cowboy reacted with an even wider grin. "Ken Maynard and Tarsun." Cowboy nodded wisely.

"That the name of Maynard's horse?" Scott inquired of Jones.

"If Cowboy says so, that's good enough for me."

"Douglas Fairbanks?" Scott asked.

Cowboy swashbuckled, using a broken shovel handle as a sword. He fenced, leaped, whirled, and finally fell in a heap mortally wounded. He lay still on the cold rock floor of the chamber.

"What a panic," Scott said.

"At least as good as Chaplin," Jones agreed. "He'd be an agent's meal ticket in Hollywood."

"Teeda Barra?" Cowboy inquired from the floor. He got up and approached Jones, his head thrown back, his eyes half shut, peering out and fluttering his lids seductively. He ran his fingers lightly up Jones's sleeve. "Teeda Barra?"

"Teddy Bear?" Scott tried.

"Theda Bera!" Jones recognized Cowboy's switch. "By God, he's a vamp and I'm being seduced."

Above the laughter rose the sound of someone climbing the ladder. We scattered. Each grabbed a tool and swung. Crashdive climbed into the chamber. Finding us working so hard pleased him mightily. He smiled benignly, darted here and there, nodded right and left in appreciation for our effort, then departed.

Cowboy sat alone on his chunk of coal. "Petty Poop?" he called. There was no response. Without realizing it, we had all been chilled to the bone by inactivity. We dug energetically to warm ourselves. "Petty Poop," Cowboy called again, plaintively. Still no response, he tried once more. "Petty Poop?" and then he sat forlorn, not understanding why he should be deserted.

Five minutes later he tried again. "OOt Gibson?" Warm, we squatted around a grinning, happy Cowboy.

At noon, I was exhausted. I knew that I had come back to the mine too soon. But I did not want to spend the day in that little room again. I was chilled to the bone and began to have the shakes before we got back to the chamber. All during the lunch hour, I had noticed that Luke, Scott and Jones had talked earnestly and secretively. Every time I approached, as I walked to keep warm, they stopped talking and said nothing until I was again out of range. Back in the chamber, they seemed to work in an even closer grouping than usual, still with a sinister, plotting air about them. I decided they must be discussing Jeffrey's suicide. In the middle of the afternoon, I climbed down the ladder, fearing that I would be too shaky to make it at the end of the day. Crashdive noticed me shivering even while I walked about. He told me to stay there until we started home after work.

The climb out and back to the barracks was torture for me. Jones and Luke supported me; by the time we crossed the bridge, they were practically carrying me. They helped me climb the ladder to Upper Right. I pulled my blanket over me and fell into a troubled sleep. When the bugle blew for breakfast, I was too weak to stand up. My crew left without me and after Joe got back to the barracks, Doctor Larkin sent me back out to the little room from which I had just escaped. I slept all day, too, only waking long enough to drink the watery stew that Joe brought to me before he left with his crew for the night.

Dreams plagued my sleep all that night. Mountains of baked beans covered the landscape wherever I looked, all mine for the taking. But in the dreams, I couldn't eat them without catsup. Every time I grabbed a bottle to pour catsup on some of the beans, it turned out to be a bottle labeled Blood Donated by Robert Jeffrey. I woke up just as Joe Madison came into the cell to ask how I felt. As he opened the door, I had a horrible feeling that I was beginning the path that Jeffrey had just taken: for awhile Joe would come in to check on me, feed me, take care of me, bathe me, until I was really dead and too stubborn to give up. By that time, I would be as painful for Joe to look upon as Jeff had become for Jones. I wanted to tell him about it, all about the scene in the next room. The thought of revealing that I had sunk to being a peeping Tom kept me dumb.

Joe was full of talk. "There'll be plenty of trouble," he began.

"How so?"

"Zack Brown just stopped me on my way out here to see if there wasn't something I could do about it."

"About what?"

"You know how full the *bengo* tank is?"

I nodded. It was half filled with stinking rotting excreta when we arrived and we had been in this camp at Warui for months. It was brimming now. In China, the Japs had sold it to the farmers for fertilizer and they came in regularly with their poles and buckets to carry it out of the compound for us. Japanese farmers did not use human shit for fertilizer.

"Watanabe issued an order to Doctor Larkin that we get busy carrying it away and dumping it in the creek down there below us."

"And about time, too," I said.

"Wait'll you hear Larkin's scheme."

"What is it?"

"Zack just told me that Larkin had him type up an order that the detail will begin tonight. Here's the wrinkle. Only privates and seamen have to man the poles and buckets to carry the stuff away! Zack swore to me that's the way Larkin wrote up the order."

"The shit'll literally hit the fan now," I said.

"Who can blame them?" Joe said bitterly. "Larkin must be nuts. How does he think we'll feel about this?"

"He doesn't care, Joe. Larkin's not concerned with us. Let's go see him to try to get him to change that before he puts out the order."

"Zack told me something else, too. He said Jones and Luke and Scott and him are going over the wall. He asked me to go along with them if I want to."

"What did you say?"

"I said I'd consider it. What else could I say?"

"You know what started that crazy talk?"

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"Crazy?"

"You know they couldn't get two miles away," I cried.

"Maybe," Joe said with a strange calmness. "Maybe that's so and maybe it isn't."

"You know what started that crazy idea in Jones's head?"

"Jones's? What makes you think he started it?"

"Those guys were sitting under my window last tenth day talking, all talking about going over the wall. Jones wasn't for it then. He discouraged Scott and Luke, too. He knew there was no chance to make it. Now a couple of days later he's forming plans to go. Does that make sense to you, Joe?"

"If he is the leader, as you assume. Maybe he isn't the guy behind it."

"He is, Joe. You know as well as I do that Jones could own those guys body and soul if he wanted to, maybe not Zack, but maybe even him." I took a deep breath and told him about Jeffrey and Jones and about me watching them through the crack and knothole, like a spy.

"Christ Almighty!" Joe said. "Merciful Christ."

We sat there in silence for a long time while Joe just thought about what I had told him. Finally, I had to speak, "Now you see why Jones considers the wall."

"What else can he do" Joe asked. "What can a man do in a case like this, sit around until it drives him crazy? I think he's right to go. He'll go off the deep end if he doesn't try it."

"He's already slipped if he tries the wall," I said. "What's to become of us, Joe? Do we all have to die or go mad? Is that all that's left to us?"

"Never give up!" Joe said. "Never give up!"

"Sometimes I'm tired, Joe. Sometimes I'm almost too tired. I must be slipping. Peeking through a crack like a schoolboy or an old woman. I must be bad off!"

"Never say it, never give up," Joe repeated. "Think about Ellen. Think about Johnny. Don't be a guy who even thinks about giving up. Hang on and act as much like a man as you can. Peeking through a crack is nothing. Everybody peeks through cracks. You know that, John. Every time a man squats in one of those stalls in the toilets he peeks through the cracks to see if the guy in the next stall is flogging his dummy. So, OK! We peek through cracks! What the hell? Peeking won't kill us! We're still on safe ground as long as we're ashamed of ourselves. Never give up, John! Never!" He stood up. "Come on now. Let's act like men right now. Let's go tell Larkin to jam his order up his ass. That'll give us a new lease on life." He helped me onto my feet and supported me across the yard into the barracks. "Give me a hand, Zack," he called. The two of them boosted me up the ladder.

Doctor Larkin sat on the foot locker that the men had carried all over the Orient for him. How he ever managed to hang onto it is a mystery. He did have two lockers but one of them accidentally slipped out of the men's hands as they were unloading it off the boat that brought us to Japan. They were putting stuff over the side onto a barge and Doctor Larkin's second locker slipped out of their hands and plunged right to the bottom of the sea. He stood beside the crew threatening court martials if the second one did not get ashore safely. He watched it every inch of the way and that's the only reason he still had it there beneath the window so he could sit on it.

Larkin polished his shoes methodically with a little piece of rag. He and Holm always had a man do that for them before we got here. In Warui, I guess every man decided it wasn't worth the candle, he was no longer able to keep them from the mines so there was no percentage in making points with the austere old man.

"Have you been properly transferred from that cell, Lieutenant?" he asked, his voice brittle, impersonal.

"No, sir. I can't stand it any longer out there."

"Lieutenant, return to your assignment until you have been properly released." My first inclination was to turn around and go back. My second was to stumble over and hit him in the face.

"I can't go back, Doctor."

"But I ordered you to go back, sir."

"He means," Joe said, "that if he goes back out there he'll die just the same as every other man dies when he spends a lot of time out there alone in one of those boxes. Mr. Towne is not ready to die yet, Doctor,"

"Of course he isn't," Doctor Larkin said. "The rest will pick him right up. Nobody can rest in here. I should think that you'd be glad to get the privacy."

"I'm not. I can't stand to be alone with John Morton Grace." I felt like a little boy being chastised by a harsh, unreachable father. Tears of frustration were near.

"Mr. Towne is not going back out there, Doctor," Joe said. "If you want to try to do something about that, you may try. But I am going to the Jap office and try to prevent it if you insist that Mr. Towne spend another goddamned minute out there in that coffin. Do you understand what I am saying, Doctor Larkin?"

"Indeed I do, Mr. Madison. Indeed, I do." He stood up, cinched his belt a little snugger and prepared to leave.

Joe and I stood there, impotent and outraged. At that moment, we heard a great commotion in the yard and Zack ran in from the office to inform us that the day shift, my men, had been returned to the barracks so the whole camp could make a day of it cleaning out the *bengo* tank. They overflowed into the section, jabbering and singing like school boys playing truant. We were such creatures of routine, so hungry for any change in the routine, that even the prospect of emptying the latrine seemed attractive.

Zack must have run back out and caught Jones before he even got into the section. He walked directly up to the ladder, climbed it purposefully and said, "May I speak to you please, Doctor Larkin?"

"Later," Larkin said, still staring at Joe and me.

"This is urgent, Doctor." Jones's face was set in lines of unmistakable determination, like a piece of ancient sculpture.

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"Proceed, Sergeant."

"Is it correct that you have reworded the Japanese order so only privates and seamen are required to man the poles and buckets?"

"That is correct, Sergeant."

"Does that not seem a little ridiculous to you, Doctor? After all we all use that *bengo*. Everyone ought to help clean it out."

"Do you understand my order, Sergeant? Is it clear and specific?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then go carry it out. Dismissed."

"Doctor, . . ."

"Dismissed!" Larkin turned his back and stared out the window. Jones did not even seem to notice Joe and me. He leaped from the platform, ran out the door and we heard him running up the corridor toward the *bengo* at the end of the building. Joe and I followed Jones. Zack Brown had already formed a couple of teams to carry buckets, Babe Trent and Jug manned one pole, Scott and Luke another, while Zack, with a piece of cloth tied over his mouth and nostrils, stood by the slot in the wall with a long-handled dipper filling their buckets as they brought them to him. Zack realized, just as Joe and I did, that we might rebel against Doctor Larkin but we could not quibble with the Japs' order to empty the latrine tank.

Joe and I had just swung a pole on our shoulders and stood in line long enough to reach Zack when Jones came out of one of the stalls, pulling up his pants. "Dysentery won't wait," he said. Then he spoke to Zack. "I've got it all figured out. Just what to do and how to do it. You sneak in and get me some paper and we'll make a petition out of it. If Larkin won't retract that stupid order, we'll take it to the Japs." Then he saw Joe and me standing there and turned his back on us. He spoke quietly to Zack, who disappeared, reappearing shortly with Ben Lucas and Carey and Thor Johnson. Thor walked over and took the pole from me.

"You go back to bed, Lieutenant. This'll kill you."

"I've got to help," I insisted.

"Go back and lie down, John," Joe said. "The smell alone is enough to kill a man in your condition." He was right, the instant Zack had put his dipper into the *bengo*, the whole valley seemed to be filled with the terrible stench which rose from the depths of the tank once the surface had been broken. My eyes watered and I coughed.

When Thor took my end of the pole, I thought I would fall and leaned against the wall for support. Carey took the dipper from Zack who sped off toward the Jap office. Ben opened the other slot in the wall and manned the second dipper just as I started back toward Section One.

The effort exhausted me. I expected to fall right into sleep but the break in routine excited me and I lay on my blanket wide awake and thinking, recalling another time I had lain in this same spot listening and thinking the morning Colonel Holm had been suddenly snapped out of our midst and taken away.

"You must remember, Doctor," Colonel Holm had said, "that pure discipline will bring more of these men through alive than anything else. Pure discipline will do it if anything will. It's your responsibility as senior officer present to maintain discipline in the ranks. You understand that, Doctor, I'm sure."

Doctor Larkin nodded agreement and the next thing we knew Colonel Holm was snatched away and we were glad of it. Doctor Larkin was remote and unreachable. That was better than Colonel Holm's air of false friendliness. Holm would get Joe or me in a position where we were forced to act as if we believed his camaraderie were genuine and try to reciprocate it and then suddenly he would be standing on a point of military rank or procedure and insulting us by the book.

Almost as if thinking about him had brought him back, Colonel Holm climbed the ladder again. "Hello, Doctor," he said as blandly as if he had been gone no further than if he had walked out to the bathhouse. I lifted my head involuntarily, at the sound of his voice, but he did not even speak to me until he had shaken Doctor's hand. Briefly, Doctor Larkin told him of what he termed Joe's and my own insubordination and of Jones's rank insolence. Without even mentioning where the Japs had taken him nor how he happened to come back, Colonel Holm prepared for action.

"Got the Book?" he asked Doctor Larkin.

Larkin fumbled in his locker and brought out the tattered copy of the Rocks and Shoals, Court Martial Procedure. He thumbed through it.

Jones entered the section and climbed the ladder. He was astonished to see Colonel Holm there. Joe Madison climbed up behind him. "Doctor Larkin, may I speak to you, please?"

"I'm in charge here now, Sergeant," Colonel Holm said. "Anything you have to say before you go to the guardhouse should be said to me."

"I'd like to read this to you."

"Give it here. I'll read it to myself."

"I said I wanted to read it to you." Jones's face became as impassive as a statue again.

"Give it to me!" His voice was imperious, he thrust out his hand.

"I prefer to read it to you."

"Hand it to me!" Colonel Holm's nostrils grew white around the edges. Then the color left his face, first from the bridge of his nose, then his forehead and the edges of his face, leaving two spots on his cheeks which faded out last like the final embers of a dying fire. Jones's impassivity infuriated him more. Without moving his head, Colonel Holm said, "Doctor Larkin, get me that paper."

Doctor Larkin took one step toward Jones.

"Don't touch it, Doctor," he said.

"Get it!" Holm barked.

"Touch that paper and I'll pitch you over the rail." There was no doubt of his power or determination to do it. "It's my paper." Larkin's hands dangled in space, he glanced into the stove well in the middle of the floor in the section. Slowly his hand relaxed and dropped to his side.

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"How dare you!" Colonel Holm said.

"If anyone," Jones stressed the word, "attempts to take this paper I'll pitch him into the stove well. I want to read it to you; if you can't be bothered to listen, I'll be forced to take it to the Japs."

"Take it to the Japs! Take it to the Japs! I'll take you to the Japs."

"I have anticipated that, sir," Jones said.

"You've what?"

"Recalling your former habit of turning any dissenter from the ranks over to the Japs for punishment which sometimes led directly to the man's death, I have protected myself against that possibility by writing full explanatory letters which are certain to survive if I do not."

Colonel Holm and Larkin both stood speechless.

Jones continued, "I have written a letter to the Senator from my state in five copies; one of them is sure to survive with the friend who has it. I have set down what I am doing, what prompted the action and what you are most apt to do now. Further, I have cited instances of six men you handed over to the Japs in the past with the request that they be punished. Three died while undergoing the punishment and two later died after they got out of *eso*." Jones stopped, watchful, wary, waiting.

Larkin and Holm were dazed by the implication.

"That's not true," Larkin finally said in a low voice.

"I think it is. Why you just promised me the same treatment. Knowing your habits, I merely took the precaution of assuring myself that your peculiar sense of justice should not go unsung when you return home."

"Threats, insinuations, attempts to intimidate, none of this will get you anywhere," Holm said, but there was a new, subdued quality in his voice, a sort of wonder, as if a whole new area of thought had been opened up for him. "You realize what it means to threaten an officer." It was a statement of fact.

"Certainly, sir. I understand your system of justice very well." Jones waited for an answer. "Shall I read now?"

"Proceed, Sergeant."

"We, the undersigned," Jones read in an undertone, "protest the order compelling privates to empty the toilet and exempting all officers and non-commissioned officers from said detail." Then he read the list of names and Joe Madison's led all the rest. When he finished, he folded the paper and held it at his side.

"Undeniable act of mutiny," Holm said with satisfaction. "Every signer will be summarily dealt with when we get back to the United States. You'll get no mercy from me . . ."

"Justice?" Jones inquired.

"Traitors!"

"To what?"

"Your country."

"You mean to you, Colonel."

"As far as you're concerned, I am America."

"You are mistaken sir. You are only part of it, one of the bad parts."

Colonel Holm's rage knew no bounds, he did not even try to control it. "Give me that paper, give it to me!"

Jones said nothing. Holm took a step toward him. Jones doubled his fists and Joe Madison stepped close to him. Holm turned and sat down on Larkin's locker box. "Get out!"

"Yes, sir. And your decision about the petition?"

"Get out!"

"Yes, sir," Jones about-faced with precision which would have won praise from a drill instructor in boot camp. He went to the ladder without a glance at either of us.

"You'll regret this, Sergeant Jones. Your insolence and insubordination are incredible. Incredible." He rolled the word on his tongue. "I'll deal with you when the war is ended."

"I suppose you will, sir." Jones climbed down the ladder and left the section.

"Lieutenant Madison, what is the meaning of this?" Holm roared.

"Perhaps you ought to ask Doctor Larkin, Colonel. He put out that silly order."

"I'm asking you, Madison."

"The implication is that we are too good to carry our own shit, Colonel."

"Silence."

"You asked for an explanation."

"Now I'm ordering and you obey, Lieutenant!"

"Colonel Holm, there is one thing you ought to recognize, sir. We are not schoolboys, nor raw recruits. We are men who have been through a good deal more than most people are ever required to endure. You are no longer on a parade ground, Colonel. You are right here with us. Only by the grace of God will we survive. You ought to remember that, Colonel, we are men, tired, hungry, sick, but still men, Colonel."

"When I want your advice, Lt., I'll ask you for it. As long as I am Senior Officer, I expect my orders to be obeyed."

Joe helped me down and we went out to the yard. He sat me in the unfamiliar sunshine and worked the poles and buckets until the Japs called a halt late in the afternoon. We had paused for a noon meal but the food was so unpalatable and the stench so terrible that few could even swallow it. By the time for the night meal, we had such a hunger that we all ate *fuki* in spite of the smell.

Neither Colonel Holm nor Doctor Larkin had left the section all day. In the evening, they sat on Doctor Larkin's locker while Joe and I lay along the wall at the head of the ladder with our faces toward the other half of the section so that we could watch the men and be as far as possible from Larkin and Holm.

Kato appeared in the doorway. "Zack," he called in his little voice.

Zack scampered down the ladder and to the doorway. Everyone saw Kato give him the package of cigarettes. Kato stood there until he had climbed back up the ladder, then he said, "Thank you for fornication, Zack." After the laughter died, Zack explained curtly,

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"Get your minds out of the gutter, that was only Kato's new word for the day."

Section One was very quiet that night. After roll call inspection, everyone seemed to be in his blankets earlier than usual. Joe and I lay where we were until long after taps. There was nothing to say. We just lay there. Waiting.

About midnight, Joe patted me on the shoulder, slipped over the edge and down the ladder toward the *bengo*. A few minutes later, the four from across the well, Scott, Luke, Zack and Jones, one by one slipped stealthily down the ladder and disappeared. I listened with my whole body for the sound of them on the wall but they had cat feet. I heard the guard stomp past outside, then the guard stomp by inside and heard their footsteps pause for a few moments while they exchanged some word at the far corner, one outside the fence, one inside.

Nobody came back. Nothing happened at all. "Dear God, let them make it," I prayed. "Be good to them!" I begged. I strained and begged and listened so hard and so long that finally I fell into a deep sleep.

The bugle woke me. Because we had not worked at all in the mine, a regular morning roll call inspection was held just like Tenth Day. Men who slept on the ground floor lined up in front of their ten sleeping spots on either side of the door. The men from the upper platforms came down and stood directly in front of them. Doctor Larkin was first to notice the empty spots.

"Samuelson," he barked at Pars, "to the toilet on the double. Get those men back here!"

Pars ran out the door and pounded up the corridor. We heard the Japs in the corridors. Just then Pars dashed in, called, "Nobody's in the *bengo*," and slipped into his place in line.

Colonel Holm stood beside the door, his jaw set firmly as he realized that the five men were over the wall. They had to be, there was no other place for them to be. He closed his eyes and Sergeant Eyeballs swaggered in with trailing sword. With flourishes and caricatures of military movements, Eyeballs came to attention in front of Colonel Holm.

"*Go mei kits,*" Colonel Holm reported, his voice barely audible.

"*Go mei kits*!" he bellowed. "*Go mei kits*!" (five men short). He ran back to the guardhouse to return almost instantaneously accompanied by Captain Watanabe, Crashdive, and Kato.

"*Go mei*?" Watanabe asked Colonel Holm. "*Go mei*?"

"*Go mei,*" Holm repeated.

"Five men! Five men!" Watanabe roared. He kicked Colonel Holm in the shin. Then he stomped over to the empty spot across from us. He rattled staccato syllables at Kato.

"Captain Watanabe wants to know who helped," Kato piped.

"I don't know."

Watanabe strode across the small floor and slapped the Colonel across the face. A white handmark disappeared rapidly, then the mark came back fiery red. The rest of Holm's face now turned white with his rage and humiliation. Watanabe stared at this color change, then raised his hand and slapped him across the other cheek even harder. "Who helped?" he demanded in English.

"I don't know," the Colonel repeated.

Watanabe slapped him again. He kicked him brutally on first one shin and then the other, sharp quick blows that sliced through the hide to the bones. Holm flinched but then froze at rigid attention.

"Who helped?"

"I don't know," he repeated through clenched teeth.

Watanabe doubled his fists. "Who helped?"

Colonel Holm closed his eyes, waiting for the blows.

Watanabe surprised all of us. He stepped one pace over to face Doctor Larkin. Eyeballs, Crashdive and Kato also moved one pace sideways. I dared not look from the corner of my eye to catch Larkin's reaction. I began to steel myself. Obviously, my turn was next.

"Mr. Towne, *go mei's tamadachi*!" Larkin cried out. "Friends," he repeated in English. "*Tamadachis*!" I saw a blur of motion as he gestured toward me. Watanabe leaped over in front of me.

"*Tamadachis*?" he asked softly.

"Yes, sir," I said.

"You helped *tamadachis* escape," Watanabe said it flatly as a statement of fact, not as a question.

"No, sir!"

"You help!"

"No!"

"Yes!" he seemed to hiss it. His angry slap cracked in the silence like a rifle shot but it came so quickly I could not duck.

"I did not help *tamadachis*," I finally said.

Watanabe slugged me in the gut with a fury that drove the wind out of me and doubled me over. I was unable to straighten up. He caught me in the face with an uppercut. Gasping, I bent over again as I tried to recover my breath. He brought both fists down on my head with an angry curse. It drove me to the floor on my face. He barked. Crashdive and Eyeballs lifted me to my feet and leaned me against the four-by-four support of the upper platform.

Eyeballs stepped back, commanded Crashdive to begin on me. "Dear God," I prayed to myself, "Don't let me say anything! Don't let me say anything!" Crashdive came at me, beating me on the head, both arms flailing. He drove me against the post. If I began to totter one way, he beat me back into an upright position. Blood ran down my face, into my mouth and I blew it all over his face as he hammered on me and my breath came in rasping gasps.

He stepped back. I slid to the floor, the post rubbing the skin from my back as I tried futilely to resist. "Who you help?" Watanabe cried.

If I could have said a word, I would probably have answered with something to make them stop. I could not speak, I could only look dumbly up at him from where I sat and leaned against the post. He gestured

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to Crashdive. I tried to roll away from Crashdive's foot but his hobnails caught me in the left side just below the ribs as I tried to roll away. The flesh tore. I wanted to scream and couldn't.

"*Bakero*!" Crashdive screamed at me. He drove his foot into my belly. The air whistled through my bloody teeth as he drove it from my lungs. It seemed that the pain could be no greater. My head rolled from side to side as I clawed my chest and fought for breath. The agony undid me. I prayed for breath so I could tell him anything he wanted to know. Just let me get my breath I kept thinking. As my head rolled from side to side, the horrified faces of the men swam into my sight and out again.

Eyeball's foot swung toward my head. I tried to scream. I tried to move. I saw Thor Johnson dive from the front rank of men across the room. Then the boot crashed into my head.

As I regained consciousness, pain registered, not sharp and burning as when the blows rained down on me, but enormous pressures too great to bear. I moved my head a little and the pain intensified like a super-pain never before conceived by me. I whimpered. A gentle, soothing touch moved lightly across my forehead. Through the agony, it registered with me that my head rested in a lap.

I opened one eye, the other was stuck shut with blood. A hazy glimpse told me that I was in one of the two *eso* cells behind the Jap guardhouse. As I tried to lift my head, God-sent oblivion returned.

The next time I returned to consciousness, the pain was still there all right. Now it was a different quality. Everywhere. Incessant. Yet not of the same unhuman pitch as the first time. My head ached, yet I could move it. I knew my head was in a lap immediately. I remembered being in *eso*. Knowing I would not black out again so quickly, I lay there breathing deeply and trying to think when I suddenly realized that this had to be Thor Johnson holding my head; I opened one eye cautiously, the other would not come unstuck. *Eso* cells are too short to stretch out in, and too narrow, and too low to stand upright in. At first the walls danced and wove dizzily, then steadied and seemed to close in on me. After a moment, I fastened my eyes on the little window in the door through which the Japanese pushed the rice bowl or the water. I kept looking steadily at it until it assumed its proper rectangular shape and proportions of about five inches square.

As the little slotted window began to swing open, I shut my eye quickly and peered through the lashes. Eyeballs peered in a moment, his eyes did not look mean, nor hateful. They just looked like eyes. Apparently satisfied with what he saw, the little door closed again. I moved my hand up to look at it. There was blood on it but there was no pain in it.

"Are you awake, Mr. Towne?" Thor asked, his mouth close to my ear.

When I tried to talk, I coughed instead.

"Close your eyes!" Thor whispered urgently and I felt him go limp again. He sagged. I closed my eye.

The little slot opened. Eyeballs' face appeared again. He watched and waited. The little door swung almost shut, then snapped open again. I lay very still, finally Eyeballs closed it. We heard him walk up the corridor.

Again I heard Thor's voice close to my ear. "Is the pain bad?"

Half afraid that I would cough again and attract Eyeballs, I began to shake my head but remembered the pain. "Yes," I whispered, "terrible." He patted my shoulder. "You?" I asked.

"Not as bad as you," he said. I rolled my head to look up at him. Thor bent over me, curved like a contortionist so that he could give me as much room as possible and still hold my head on his lap. His nostrils were clogged with bloody scabs and his nose swelled out around them like a rotten apple, big and black and red in splotches. Both eyes were blackened and swollen almost shut. Thor looked so awful I almost forgot the pain from rolling my head.

"Thank . . ."

"Don't say it," he whispered fiercely. "Don't say a word!"

"How long have we been here?" I asked.

"Couple of hours maybe. It must be six o'clock. It's broad daylight now." We heard the clomping steps of Eyeballs coming up the corridor. Thor sagged and I closed my eyes.

This time Eyeballs opened the door. He tugged on my foot so I opened my eye. He motioned for me to come out. When I tried to move, the pain rose to such a crescendo that which had been seemed like nothing in comparison. Eyeballs grabbed me by the legs and dragged me out. I was grateful, in a way, for I don't think I could have forced myself to endure the movement. Thor came out feet first and then helped me to my feet. Eyeballs motioned for us to follow him. Thor pulled my arm across his shoulder and half carried me, half dragged me while I bit my lip until blood came to keep myself from screaming out. The sunlight hurt my eye so I closed it. Eyeballs prodded Thor out of the gatehouse before he called us to a halt. After we had stood there for a couple of minutes, I opened my eye.

The entire group of prisoners stood at rigid attention in the little yard, all facing the gate. Captain Larkin and Colonel Holm stood in front of them. At the sight of us, Carey retched and retched but had nothing on his stomach to vomit up. He didn't stop until Eyeballs went over and slapped his face.

A shout rose from the other end of the drawbridge. I saw them unloaded from a truck, all five of them. Little Scott came first, with Zack leading Luke right behind him. Jones carried Joe Madison over his shoulder. As they entered the gate, Scott called, "Take a truck when you leave." Eyeballs ran to him and slapped him across the mouth. Scott drew his lips back in a forced, tight grin. "And kill that son of a bitch first!" he said. Eyeballs swung a haymaker to his stomach and Scott sank to the ground.

Luke seemed to have taken the worst beating probably because he was so big. His eyes were puffed completely shut and he would have stumbled into Eyeballs

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if Zack had not guided him. For a moment, Jones stood there just holding Joe, then he bent over as if to place him gently on the ground. Eyeballs pushed him roughly and Joe dropped the last two feet, sat upright for just a second, then lay over backward like a piece of ribbon, as if he had no backbone. He sprawled on his back with legs outspread toward Thor and me. For a moment it did not register with me. Joe's face was unmarred. Then I saw his groin. His trousers were torn and bloody. Crashdive had kicked Joe in the balls. Thor tried to hold me but I sank to the ground, unconscious again.

The cry, "*Bakero*! *Bakero*!" brought me back to life again. We were in the same *eso* cell. Eyeballs stood in the corridor cursing Crashdive who mumbled unintelligibly in response. Thor had torn my shirt and his into strips and wound them around my head, my chest and my stomach. "What's happening?" I asked.

"Crashdive has been poking a stick through the rice hole at those five guys jammed into that other cell. Somebody just grabbed the stick and pulled it through the hole. Eyeballs is giving Crashdive hell about it."

Eyeballs stomped away up the corridor. "He's crazy, crazy," Thor said. "I don't see how those guys are packed into that place. Imagine three more in here with us." It seemed impossible that five men could be squeezed into a space so small.

"Watch it!" Jones screamed. "He's sticking his bayonet through!" Terrified scufflings and grunts came to us, as they tried to avoid the jabbing bayonet.

"What'll I do?" Luke yelled. "What'll I do? He's slashing us!"

"Grab it!" Jones yelled.

"Now what?" Luke asked. We could tell from the shouts of rage from Crashdive that Luke held the end of the rifle.

"Hold on!" Jones screamed, "Hold on!" We could hear them shifting around. "Hold it steady a second till I get the bayonet off; now, everybody pull!" Only Crashdive's grunts and shouts now, Thor and I exchanged perplexed looks. "Here it comes! Now, grab his hand!"

"Get it!" Luke shouted triumphantly.

"Pull. Goddamn it, pull!" Jones shouted.

Crashdive began to whimper piteously.

Thor tapped on the wall. "What's happening?"

"Crashdive stuck . . ."

"We know that. What's going on now?"

Jones shouted, "The son of a bitch was sticking his bayonet through the rice slot and stabbing us, Luke grabbed it and pulled. Crashdive hung onto the rifle and when his hand got in the slot, Luke grabbed it. We've got Crashdive's arm in *eso* with us clear up to the shoulder!"

"What're you going to do now?" Thor asked incredulously.

"We've got a rifle and a bayonet in here, too."

"What are you going to do now?" I shouted.

After a long silence—we knew they were asking themselves the same question—Jones answered, "Pray."

Now Crashdive screamed in agony. I imagined the sudden pain as Luke and Jones must have twisted his arm. Eyeballs ran up the corridor, shouting questions. Crashdive babbled an explanation. Eyeballs bellowed. In a few moments, Kato shuffled in on the run. There was a quick, muffled conference. Neither Thor nor I could catch the gist of it. Someone ran up the corridor again, to return in a few moments with Colonel Holm and Doctor Larkin. Captain Watanabe accompanied them. Now he spoke English.

"Tell them to ret go," Watanabe was so excited, his accent slipped.

"Lieutenant Madison," Colonel Holm called.

"He's still out cold!" Scott screamed.

"Sergeant Jones?"

"What?"

"Let go of this man's arm!"

"Why?"

"Because I say so. You can gain nothing by this."

"It keeps those bastards from sticking bayonets in that hole and slashing us!"

"You can't gain anything by this absurd action!" Holm was impatient.

"We're still alive!" Scott shouted. "That's more than we would be if he had stuck that bayonet in a few more times."

"God knows what they'll do if you don't release him."

"We know what they'll do if we let him go," Jones replied.

They must have twisted Crashdive's arm. He screamed in agony.

"Release him," Holm shouted.

"Kiss my ass, Colonel," Jones shouted back furiously.

The whole group in the corridor stomped up toward the guardhouse at the front of the building. "Can you hear me?" Thor shouted into a crack.

"We can hear you," Luke answered. "What should we do?"

"Christ only knows," Thor shouted. We sat in silence for a long time and then Thor asked. "How's Mr. Madison?" No one answered. "How can you all get in there?" Thor asked.

"We're bleeding and sweating and slimy as maggots," Jones said. "It's so hot in here we'll probably all pass out anyway."

"How is Joe Madison?" I shouted frantically.

"He's still out cold, moaning and moaning," Jones answered. "And his balls are swollen up as big as grapefruits!"

Kato opened the door to our *eso*. "Captain Watanabe says you come out." Painfully and laboriously, I crawled from the cell with Thor tugging and pushing gently; Crashdive, in agony and with eyes the size of rice bowls filled with terror, seemed to be crouching against the *eso* into which our five friends were jammed. "Captain Watanabe says you must make them come out," Kato said to me.

"Make them?" I echoed weakly, my head spinning just from being on my feet. "How?"

"Captain Watanabe did no say how." Poor little

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Kato, the prisoners' best friend in Warui, wrung his hands in agitation. "They must come out!"

"He'll kill them!" I said.

"No. no. no! Director of all war prisoners in whole island is coming. If he finds Japanese soldier like this because he was torturing prisoners, Captain Watanabe punished. Punished bad! Director Colonel Shindo very humane man. Director Shindo arrive soon. Finding Japanese soldier like this very bad for Captain Watanabe. Very bad!"

My head seemed to spin around. It seemed as though Kato's wrists were swiveled and he kept turning them around and around and around in the same direction. I turned to Thor. He too seemed to be spinning. I closed my eyes and Thor made a grab for me, thinking that I was about to collapse again. I leaned against him for a moment, recovering. "What does that sound like to you?" I asked.

"Sounds like trouble." Thor shook with excitement. "Making a deal with Watanabe wouldn't be worth a damn. As soon as the Director left the gate he'd work us over worse than ever."

"Joe!"

"He's still out cold," Jones replied. "What is it? What's going on out there?"

My voice seemed to reverberate through the corridor as I explained to them. "Fuck Watanabe!" Scott cried.

"What do you plan to do?" My head began to spin. I sat on the floor. "What can we do?"

"Screw him!" Scott shouted. Then there were the sounds of a low-voiced conference inside the *eso*. Thor and I waited, exchanging puzzled indecision. Regardless of what they decided, I knew that I must grasp this straw and somehow attempt to salvage us from total disaster. I got up and walked toward the guards' office. After half a dozen steps, Jones's voice halted me. "Lt?" I paused.

"Yes?"

"You better dicker with him. And Lt?"

"Yes?"

"Play them close to your belly!"

Kato leaned close to my ear. "Do not tell Captain Watanabe what I say! He'll punish me. Do not tell!" This gave a different angle to the whole thing. I thought that Watanabe would not know that I had ammunition. None of my rapid calculations nor wild flights of possibility meant anything. Just as I was escorted into Watanabe's little office, the sound of an approaching auto on the bridge electrified Captain Watanabe into action. He leaped out the door to stand at attention just as the Director's car stopped in front of his door. The little Colonel sprang lightly out. In a moment Colonel Shindo was in the office. Instead of taking the seat Captain Watanabe urged on him, Colonel Shindo, a small man even for a Japanese and with a wrinkled, leathery face indicating many years, walked over to me and peered at my still unwashed, bloody and bruised face, at the shreds of Thor's shirt bound around my ankles, arms and ribs. "What happened to you?" He spoke in English and his voice was the crackling of ancient parchment, delicate, gentle sounds, precise as the movements in a tea ritual.

I gestured with upturned palms and shrugged my shoulders. Old age is inscrutable and unpredictable. Colonel Shindo's appearance could be deceiving me because I wanted to believe he was a benign elder honorable. "What happened to you?" he repeated. Undecided, I glanced at Captain Watanabe, still standing at rigid attention by the door. I tried to determine how he felt about the Director's visit now that Colonel Shindo stood in his office. Watanabe gave no indication that he feared the Director's reprisals. I guessed that he did not propose to make an explanation, nor even to mention Crashdive trapped in the *eso* rice slot unless the Director forced him to. I think he planned to outline the details of the escape and hope Colonel Shindo would merely nod and go back to his headquarters without bothering Captain Watanabe any more.

The Colonel spoke to Captain Watanabe in Japanese briefly, then apparently waited for a reply. Captain Watanabe said nothing for a moment. The old man waited diffidently and courteously, then loosed a tirade on Watanabe's head. All the starch went out of the Captain. Gradually, I picked up a word now and again until I realized that the Colonel was ordering Captain Watanabe to bring all five re-captured prisoners into the office for an interview. Then the Colonel strode from the office door and up the corridor to the *eso* cells. I could hear nothing.

Bill Trona sat behind the little desk with the typewriter all that while. As soon as the Japanese left, Kato rushed across the room, poured a glass of water from the bottle on Watanabe's desk and handed it to me. I gulped it down before they could return. Kato had barely replaced the glass on the desk when Watanabe returned. "Lt. Towne, follow me!" His arrogance returned for a moment in the office, but as we went into the corridor, his shoulders slumped again.

Colonel Shindo stood beside the trapped Crashdive, thunderstruck by the incredible predicament of the trapped soldier. "Can you explain this to me, please?"

"Thor?" I called. "Where are you?"

"Back in here." His voice was muffled.

"That you, Lt. Towne?" Jones called.

"Yes. What is it? I don't know what's going on."

"Watanabe tried to get us to let Crashdive loose again. I thought they had taken you out and worked you over again. I thought you'd had it."

"Colonel Shindo, Director of all POWs on Hokkado is here and he wants to know what happened. I can't do anything else but tell him. We'll have to take our chances with Watanabe later."

"What is the meaning of this?" Colonel Shindo shouted. "I don't understand. How did this soldier get in such a position?"

As completely as I could, I explained what had happened to Crashdive. Colonel Shindo's face became impassive. "How many men are in there?"

"Five, sir."

"Impossible." But he believed me. Then he turned to me. "Then who are you if you're not one of the men who escaped?"

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I told him that Captain Watanabe and Eyeballs and Crashdive had beaten me because I did not have anything to tell them about the men who had gone over the wall. And I explained that Thor Johnson was still in the other *eso* cell because he had tried to stop Crashdive before he kicked me in the head. Colonel Shindo barked commands and the soldiers in the guardhouse leaped to obey. They opened the door and released Thor. When they approached the second door and fumbled with the old lock, Crashdive writhed and screamed. As the men realized what was happening, they twisted his arm and pulled on it until there was a little snapping noise somewhere inside him. Then Crashdive sagged limply on the floor but the men took up the slack in his arm and pulled it even further inside the rice slot.

"We've got a rifle!" Luke shouted. "We're firing if they monkey with that door!"

Colonel Shindo dropped on one knee beside the crack of the door. "You must come out," he said. "This soldier has been injured."

"We've all been injured," Jones called back.

"Why won't you come out?"

"Colonel, don't you think we know they'll kill us?"

"Kill you?" Colonel Shindo lost patience with them. "Where'd you get this nonsense?"

"We're half-killed already," Scott shouted.

"Take a look at Mr. Towne, there's a sample. He didn't do anything at all," Jones added. "We're dead anyway, we might just as well take this sadistic bastard with us."

Colonel Shindo slowly stood up. Very carefully, he smoothed his uniform and brushed the dust from his knee, a shamed, thoughtful look on his face. He gestured for Kato to bring Thor and me back to the office. He was sitting at the desk when we got there. After giving us water to drink, Colonel Shindo apologized for the treatment we had received, then he apologized on behalf of the Japanese people and again for the Emperor. Colonel Shindo was so gentle and so simple and so ashamed. We knew he meant it. "Every people have cruelty among it," he said.

"Thor," I said, "do you believe Colonel Shindo?"

"I do."

"You must persuade your friends to come out," Colonel Shindo said.

"What will happen to them?"

"They will be court martialed for trying to escape," the little man replied.

"What will happen to them after the soldier Crashdive is free from the door?" I persisted.

"Nothing. I give you my word."

"You don't stay here though, Colonel. I feel that you speak truly to me and from the heart. But what will happen to us after you leave Warui Camp and Captain Watanabe has his way again?"

"Captain Watanaabe has already been sent away. This was a very bad thing which he has done to you. Worse than that, he allowed his soldiers to do bad things. You must have no fear about that. Captain Watanabe is ashamed. Go, persuade your friends to release the soldier and come out."

Kato started to accompany Thor and me, Colonel Shindo stopped him, then sent him to call the guards away. Thor and I walked up the corridor together. Only Crashdive shared it with us. As we reached him, Thor dashed ahead of me and drew back his leg. "Thor!" He froze, then his legs slowly swung down to the floor. He shook his head wearily.

"Mr. Towne, what now?"

I explained.

"We're coming out," Jones relayed. "We decided to anyway. No matter what we do or say, we have to come out. Get the keyman."

Thor went to the door of the office. Colonel Shindo himself brought the key, knelt down to unlock the door. Still holding on to Crashdive's arm, the men pushed the door slowly open, revealing the five of them crammed in but with Joe Madison lying flat on the floor. The stench of blood and sweat rolled out of the door. Colonel Shindo squatted until only Joe remained inside, all the others stood and stretched in the corridor. Joe's testicles stretched taut the scrotum and it shone like a reflector. Thor released Crashdive whom he had held while Luke released his arm to crawl out. Luke grabbed him back again. Thor knelt and dragged Joe slowly through the little door. Colonel Shindo blanched and turned away.

"Who is responsible for this?" he asked.

"Crashdive," Jones replied, pointing to the soldier cradling his broken arm.

Carrying Joe between them, Luke and Thor led the way to the office, following Colonel Shindo. Jones and Scott each carried a spraddled leg while Zack Brown lifted Joe by the shoulders. Kato walked along beside me, still wringing his hands. Colonel Shindo lost all the indecision the moment he sat down behind the desk. At a word from him, Kato directed Bill Trona to put a fresh piece of paper into his machine, then he called in Crashdive and Eyeballs. His gentle tones sandpapered their arrogance to blanched submission. At a final quiet word from him, they left the office and stood at attention beside the Colonel's car. Slowly, aloud, Colonel Shindo deliberated about the offenders, and as he talked Kato translated for Bill Trona to record on the typewriter. Bill worked in little spurts of finger work. Every time he pounded the keys, the little table trembled and an ash box jiggled toward the edge of the typing table. Bill would reach out quickly and snatch it back close to the machine just when it seemed that it would tumble off onto the floor. The turmoil of the escape had so disrupted the efficiency of the routines that Jeffrey's ashes had been forgotten and left casually on that table instead of being stored with the rest of the ash boxes which had been sent back from the crematorium. The dancing box fascinated me so that I heard the Colonel and Kato hazily—as in a dream.

". . . so because you have broken faith with us by trying to escape when we do as much or more for you prisoners than we do for ourselves, Imperial Japanese

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Soldiers, you are sentenced to remain in *eso* for the next thirty days." He snapped his fingers and gestured to the soldiers at the door who led Luke and Jones and Zack and Scott away. "Because you have offended the Emperor by assaulting a Japanese soldier, you" he gestured toward Thor, "must be quiet and sincere and remain in *eso* for sixty days." Another guard led speechless, dumbfounded Thor out the door and down the corridor. "Hospital, hospital" Shindo said to Kato, gesturing toward Joe and me. Kato was at the door when Colonel Shindo spoke again. "Colonel Holm and Doctor Larkin now also."

Holm and Larkin came in almost at once. Colonel Shindo spoke to them in English, rapidly, with a touch of embarrassment, I thought; he never looked at them once. He chastised them for permitting such a thing to happen to men under their command. Then he ordered them to restore Joe and me to health.

Kato returned with Gladhand, Carey, Ben Lucas and Jug carrying stretchers. They lifted Joe onto one and I was made to lie on the other. They carried us to the little rooms along the wall at the rear of the yard. They put Joe in Jeffrey's old room and me between him and John Morton Grace. Then Kato shooed them all out and gave me a drink of water. I sank into a troubled, exhausted insensibility to the incessant humming of a lullaby seeping through the cracks, from John Morton Grace.

I must have slept for only a few minutes. At first I thought I was screaming in a dream. Actually, Joe Madison was screaming in the next room. I lifted my aching head and peered through the crack and knothole I had used to peep at Jeffrey. Then I did scream.

Gladhand Jackson knelt on one of Joe's shoulders while Bill Trona attempted to hold the other one down. One of Joe's feet had been pulled over each side of the sleeping platform and tied securely together underneath. Terror mingled with the screams of rage in Joe's eyes as he watched Doctor Larkin arrange his knives on a little table which had been carried into the room. When Doctor Larkin turned toward the bed, holding a hypodermic syringe against the window light for a final check as he pushed the plunger lightly to force all the air out, Joe twisted and fought like a writhing serpent. "No!" he bellowed, glancing down the length of him toward his smashed, enormously swollen testicles. As Doctor Larkin took a step toward him, Joe screamed, "No, no, no," and he was still screaming as I again lost consciousness on my side of the wall.

The smell of warm fresh blood hung in my little room like the sickening smell of a slaughterhouse. I could not look through the crack. I could hear John Morton Grace singing softly, "Rock a bye baby in the tree top when the wind blows the cradle will rock," . . . The air nauseated me, I dragged my aching body from the bed and flung open the door, staggered outside and leaned against the wall, gulping air. But still the air stank of warm blood. I staggered a few steps away from the building to escape the strangling . . . .

The Colonel's car still stood just inside the gate. Crashdive and Eyeballs stood at droopy attention beside it. In the back seat, Captain Watanabe sat at rigid attention, staring haughtily straight ahead. My hand sought my head and I realized that the bandages had come off as I tossed on the platform and that I had reopened the wounds. This was my own blood flowing that I smelled. A volcano of rage churned inside me, then erupted. I wanted to smash them as they stood by the Colonel's car. When I tried to run toward them, a wave of pain shrouded my entire body, seemed to cease abruptly and completely for a moment, then danced up my backbone and exploded into darkness inside my head. I knew I was falling but I did not know it when I hit the hard packed earth.

The next time I woke up, I was tied to my platform, flat on my back. Darkness had come. I was alone in the night. Yet, not really alone for on one side of me John Morton Grace hummed. From the other side came the dry, wracking sobs of Joe Madison. Joe Madison weeping, weeping . . . .

Time passed, wretched hours of fitful sleep broken by the frequent, gentle ministrations of Milton Carey. Once Carey said, "I'm to stay in Lt. Madison's room but I look in on you every little while."

"How is Joe?"

"He'll be all . . . . He'll get well, Mr. Towne." Carey said. "Will you stay in bed, Mr. Towne? I'll untie those straps if you'll promise to stay in bed. You must ache from being in that same position for two days."

"I'll stay here."

Carey untied the straps and gently exercised my legs and arms until he heard Joe moaning. Then he pulled the blanket over me. "Do you want some more aspirins, Lt?"

"Please."

"Colonel Shindo gave me a pint of aspirins before he left." Carey rolled four into his hand, lifted my head and popped them into my mouth. He gave me a sip of water, then left. I could hear him in Joe's room for a few minutes before the aspirins put me back to sleep.

The next time I woke up, Doctor Larkin and Colonel Holm stood by my pad staring down at me. "Good morning, Lieutenant," "How do you feel?"

"Grand."

"Don't be impertinent."

"How long have I been here?"

"Seventy-two hours," Holm turned to Doctor Larkin. "Can he be moved?"

"Of course, Colonel."

"Moved where?"

"We just got word that Colonel Shindo is returning at nine o'clock this morning. Only an order to assemble the entire command in the yard."

"Is anyone in the mine?"

"There's no work today."

"What is Shindo going to do?" I asked.

"We don't know. Apparently, the guards don't know. We were just told to assemble all men. If he's on time, Colonel Shindo should be here in about ten minutes."

"How's Joe Madison?"

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Colonel Holm glanced to Doctor Larkin, who answered. "He's doing as well as can be expected." Then they left. I heard them go into Joe's room.

My headache was gone but when I got up from the platform, every muscle in my body ached anew. I managed to get my legs into my trousers and slipped *getas* on my feet but I abandoned my attempts to get my stiff arms into shirtsleeves. At the doorway, I paused to watch a moment. All three hundred prisoners crowded the yard. Every head in the tight formation turned toward the Jap guardhouse. As I started toward them, Jug stepped out in front of them. He froze to attention eyes right. Jug saluted toward the front of the Jap guardhouse. With no spoken command, the solemn group followed his example. Then I drew near enough to see.

Zack, Jones, Scott, Luke and Thor had been brought out of *eso*. They clustered in bewilderment, as dirty and caked with blood as they had been when they had been marched across the bridge and back into the compound after their recapture. Dried blood was black on their faces. Luke looked the worst. His swollen, discolored lids left only slits for him to peer out through. I stopped at the nearest edge of the compound. Thor saw me, took a few steps toward me, hesitated, then glanced over his shoulder as if asking permission from the Japs who nodded assent. Thor joined me and the other four followed.

"I knew they weren't through with us," Jones said. "What's coming Lt?"

"Do you think they'll shoot all of us?" Luke asked.

"I know nothing either. I just got the order to come out here, too."

"My next war will be different," Zack said. "I'm only going to fight civilized people who use a white handkerchief over the eyes and a firing squad at dawn." He stretched. "I'd rather die than try to live for twenty-seven more days in *eso*. I'll never survive it." I mean it. I don't care any more, Lt. I give up."

"Joe Madison says, 'Never give up,' Zack." I wanted to give them hope and courage and to help them find the endurance to go on living. I could not. And I knew why I could not. In their tired faces I saw reality. I saw myself. I could offer them nothing because I had nothing left. I had no more endurance, no more courage, no more hope. I wanted only to lie down, to rest forever. I wanted to crawl back to my coffin to die.

Colonel Holm stood halfway between us and the hospital. He said, "Four men to carry Mr. Madison out here." The men with me moved as one. I put my hand on Thor's arm and detained him. We watched them cross to the coffin. First Doctor Larkin emerged and joined Holm near the guardhouse. After a short time, Jones came out with Joe in his arms as if he were a baby. Jones stood by the wall. The others came out. They tilted Joe's sleeping platform to get it through the door. They spread the blanket. Jones bent over and they gathered to ease Joe down. Then, one on each corner, they carried the platform over to where Thor and I stood.

"Are you awake, Joe?" I asked.

"Yes." He didn't open his eyes. He didn't move. The four who had carried him stood like sentinels at the corners of the platform. We stared down at him. He lay motionless, naked except for the breech clout bandage.

Joe said, "The sun feels good. I feel good. I think I could get up and walk around. It's as if everything is over with now." He never opened his eyes. "What are we doing out here? Is the rack ready?

"Nobody knows. We're all here waiting for Colonel Shindo." The sound of a car approaching reached us from down the valley. "That's probably Shindo coming now. It must be nine o'clock."

Everyone watched the bridge through the open gate. Then I looked back to Joe. Carey must have washed his head as well as having bathed him, for his hair was golden in the sunshine. I think I really saw Joe for the first time in months. His closed eyes were deep in the sockets. His skin stretched taut over his cheekbones. His mouth was set in a straight hard line. I recalled his weeping in the night and realized that Joe still had endurance and hope and courage even if I did not. Without them, Joe would be weeping in the sunshine.

A truck pulled onto the bridge. It stopped just outside the gate. "They're going to haul us away," I thought, but I couldn't seem to care. Colonel Shindo got out. He spoke to the assembled guards at the gatehouse. Some of them began to unload rice bags and boxes of vegetables. One guard took the little table from the guardhouse and put it near the gate by the wall in front of the formation. Then he brought a chair and placed it beside the table. Colonel Shindo stepped to the chair, then to the table.

Colonel Holm marched to the front. He stopped directly in front of the table on which Shindo stood. He about-faced, shouted, "*Kutski*!" Automatically, we froze to attention. Holm turned, saluted Colonel Shindo. Colonel Shindo returned the salute. His reply was too soft for me to hear. Colonel Holm turned to us and bellowed, "At ease!"

"Please, every man to get tea cup from barracks and return at once." The men exchanged glances but crowded through the door.

"I'll bring all of ours," Thor said, and went through the guardhouse to *eso*. I moved a few steps toward the hospital room. "Ben Lucas is bringing my cup," Carey said; "I'll get yours and Mr. Madison's." I waited.

"What's happening?" Joe asked.

"I still don't know. The soldiers have unloaded about a dozen bags of rice and some boxes of vegetables just inside the gate. Now they're opening up some cartons that look like *saki* bottles. Four bottles of something packed in each straw case. No, it's not *saki*, it's wine." The soldiers began to pass quietly down the re-forming but ragged lines. "They're passing bottles out to us."

"Hemlock," Zack said.

Colonel Shindo lifted his hand for silence. He waited for it, standing at attention with the seat of his baggy uniform reaching almost to his knees and the end of

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his long sword touching the table top. His boots glistened in the sun. His voice was loud and clear. His English precise. "This has been a cruel long war." He paused. I noticed a soldier come from the cab of the truck with a wooden bucket. He started down the front row dipping a spoonful of something into each man's cup.

Colonel Shindo began again. "The war has been long. The war has been cruel. War kills many soldiers. There is more pain and sorrow than one man can contain. But fighting goes on without thought for each man's pain or sorrow or a single man's death. Japanese soldiers are brave and not afraid to die. Japanese soldier would fight until every soldier has died." Colonel Shindo's voice cracked from some suppressed emotion. "Yesterday . . . yesterday the Emperor's voice was heard in all the land for the first time in history. Yesterday all Japanese heard the Emperor's voice on the radio for the first time. The Emperor told us of a terrible weapon. The Americans have a terrible new weapon that destroys a whole city in a minute. The Americans used this bomb and killed hundreds of thousands of innocent Japanese men, women and children. Whole cities disappear. One day Hiroshima is gone. The next day Nagasaki is gone. A single plane flies over high in the sky, then a big city is gone!"

Colonel Shindo's voice dropped to a horrified whisper. "Whole cities are gone." He came to life like a rekindled, sputtering fuse. He shouted. "Whole cities die!" Then he was old and tired again, his voice soft. "Yesterday the Emperor talked on the radio to all Japanese. The Emperor talked of the terrible new weapon Americans use against us. The Japanese are brave people. But the American weapon is terrible and we are defenseless against it. The war has ended."

Colonel Shindo stopped talking.

We stood impassive, unmoved by his deceptive tactic. The liar! The soldier with the bucket passed us and put a spoonful of sugar into each cup. "Now we drink," Colonel Shindo said. "Five men, one bottle. One bottle of wine to each five men." He waited while the bottles were quickly re-distributed. We stood numbly.

Jones poured for his friends and Joe.

Carey poured for Thor, Ben Lucas, Babe Trent, himself and me. The cloudy purple wine trembled in my cup. I looked back to Colonel Shindo. He gestured for Colonel Holm to join him on the table. He unbuckled his sword and handed it to Colonel Holm.

Colonel Shindo raised his tea cup. "Before we drink, I will make a toast." He raised his cup higher and waited for us. Then Colonel Shindo said, "To the good earth and an everlasting peace."

The spoonful of sugar did not sweeten the sour wine. It went down hard and slow. By the time my cup was empty, Colonel Shindo was off the table and half-way out the gate in the truck. It drove away.

"Bitter wine," Jones said.

"Hemlock is bitter," Zack said.

Then, it began to get through to us. Colonel Shindo was gone. The soldiers were gone. The war *was* over. A murmuring excitement kindled. We *had* survived! We made it! The murmur rose.

"Attention!" All eyes turned to Colonel Holm on the table. "Detail," he bellowed, "Attention!" His feet were planted far apart. His head lunged forward. He grasped Colonel Shindo's sword with both hands and kept thumping it broadside against his thighs. Colonel Holm's head bobbed up and down. His mouth was a grim line as he slowly looked from one end of the starving formation to another.

"Dress it up!" he finally shouted.

A. J. stepped out. He moved from row to row. By sheer volume, he roared the crooked lines of ragged, stunned war prisoners into a military formation. Only the six of us around Joe's platform stood fast. A. J. faced Colonel Holm, who snapped to attention. The two men exchanged salutes.

"Petty Officer Adamaski, assume guard at the gate." A. J. did not move. "You heard the order?"

A. J.'s reply was inaudible to me across the yard.

"When I issue an order, carry it out!" Holm cried. A. J. marched to the gate and stood there staring back at Holm. Holm's feet never moved but he rose on his toes. His knees bent and straightened out again. He was like a boxer who remembered the pose but had forgotten how to move. He bobbed and thumped his thighs with Shindo's sword. Holm could barely contain his satisfying excitement.

"The war is over," he began. "I suppose I should, but I won't make a speech." He paused, staring hard at first one face, then another. His action was that of a prosecutor trying to influence the jury men and it reminded me for the first time in years that Colonel Holm was actually a lawyer, like Joe and me, a reserve officer who had been called up by the Marine Corps only weeks before Pearl Harbor. That recalled Pearl Harbor and before. Ellen and Johnny came back into my life. They re-entered abruptly and completely. I would see them again. Life would pick up. I could see them sharp and clear when I closed my eyes. They blotted out Holm's voice until it rose to a crescendo. I opened my eyes guiltily.

"In conclusion," Colonel Holm cried out, the veins in his neck blue and bulging with his anger, "I am in command here now. Every one of you remember that. I am in command again. There will be more than one of you who spend some time in Portsmouth Naval Prison when we get back to the States. Dismissed!" He leaped from the table and strode into the Jap office which they had abandoned to him with such haste. At the door, he turned and called, "From now on, officers will tell you what to do. By God, you better do it!"

We stood with gaping mouths.

"That son of a bitch is crazy," Zack Brown finally said.

"How could he say a thing like that at a time like this?" Jones asked in wonderment, almost as if he did not believe what his ears had heard.

"He's a stupid son of a bitch!" Scott gave the ultimate judgment.

I stood behind the formation near the barracks, weak

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and dumbfounded. Then I moved slowly through the immobile men toward the table, not knowing what to do. Before I reached the wall, Joe Madison passed me and leaped onto the table. "Men!" Hostile, hurt faces turned toward him but beneath the hurt I could see bewilderment and ugly anger.

"I don't know what to say," Joe began weakly.

"Say he's crazy!" a voice prompted.

"I can only apologize for myself," Joe said. "I don't know what Colonel Holm meant. I only know what he seemed to mean, the same as you. If he meant what he seemed to mean, he's wrong. I do know that it took all of us to survive this endless war. We did that. Whatever anyone does or says, we did survive. It is true also that some of us have not always been honorable. That includes all of us at some time or other. Our battles were few and are now a long time in the past. We contributed little toward the ultimate winning of the war. We did what we could when we had the chance. The Metro is proof of that. The Metro did enough for them to seek her out and kill her. Most of our shipmates are at the bottom of the sea. Most of us can say *that*, whatever we did before we came here or afterwards. Most of our friends are long dead and gone. More of them are in the neat little ash boxes piled in the Jap office forgotten because of the terrible battles won and lost since our own. No man can ever take that solidarity of having shared away from us. No one ever."

I should have been on the platform instead of being so slow to action that Joe, his groin still unhealed, had been forced to act while I deliberated. My initial blind outrage at Colonel Holm left me after my first surge of anger. Now I only pitied him, stacking him along side of Joe.

The hollow-eyed, gaunt men gazing up at Joe must have felt the same, knowing in their hearts just as I knew that in a way we deserved more castigation than Holm could ever dish out, but knowing, too, that Holm was not the one to chastise us. They hungered for Joe to give them back their self-respect, but I knew he could not quite succeed. Joe's eyes rested in turn on Thor, on Zack, on Scott, their heads still wrapped in bandages, and on Jones who looked away from him with compassion on his face, I thought, and at Luke whose eyes were filled with tears. Zack sneered, I think to hide his feelings.

"Sometimes it seems that we have been in Warui all our lives," Joe said. "We worked hard. Starvation stalked us. Many of our friends are dead. Often, many times, indeed most of the time, there has been little understanding or pity amongst us. That's a bitter truth. Now that the war has ended, at this moment we feel that we want only to escape each other and never meet again. But we are bound together by something stronger than anything which separates us. Hunger and misery and monotony have shaped us all in a common mold which we will all try to smash, to escape and to forget. Willing or not to be bound, an everlasting bond will keep us a unit wherever we go or whatever we may do as individuals. I swear to you that I will do everything I can to prevent any man here from being sent to Portsmouth unless every man who has done a despicable thing sees Portsmouth, too.

"For myself, I am proud and honored to be a part of you. May we all be home tomorrow." Joe eased down from the table to squeeze past to the little cell he still lived in on Death Row along with John Morton Grace and me. But the sullen, silent men found tongues and closed around him to thank him awkwardly, some with only a look or a touch, for having saved them from the will to murder.

A strange feeling hurt inside me, it was as though I cried and the salty tears flowed inwardly to toughen the heart of me with their brine.

Later, when the men drifted away, Joe and I leaned against my cell door, drinking in the sunshine. Zack and Jones joined us there, then Thor and Luke and Scott. Their beards were long, their faces caked with dirt, their bandages filthy. Joe excused himself and now walked slowly and painfully back into his cell and sprawled on his platform. "Why don't you take a bath," I asked them; "you look like a bunch of war prisoners."

"I'm afraid I'll miss something if I leave the yard long enough to undress," Jones said. "The way things move around here today, I'm beginning to think it'd be foolish to blink my eyes." John Morton Grace's voice floated from his window. It was sweet and clear as a boy soprano's.

"What'll become of Grace?" Scott finally asked.

"Who knows?"

"I used to worry myself sick just thinking about going off my rocker and ending up out here with him," Scott laughed uneasily as he confessed. "Then Pars flipping right there in the section didn't do any good, either. If he'd kept that up one more day, I'd either have flipped or killed old Pars. A man can only take so much of that stuff. I'm sure as hell glad that's over."

"They say you'll never go crazy as long as you worry about going crazy," Zack said. "If that's true, you didn't have anything to worry about, Scott." Zack caught my eyes and asked, "Do you want to hear about Holm's absence from Warui?"

"Of course, Zack."

"Well, it was months ago that Kato told me about a camp over in one of those other valleys, a camp with nothing but officers. I don't know why I never told anyone else but I did tell Holm. Every day he would come into the office and request that he be sent to live in that camp for officers. That's where he went when they whisked him away. Kato told me that he wasn't happy there because all the officers worked in a garden every day. He barely got there when he began to make requests that he be sent back to 'my men at Warui.' The Japs sent him back when they did because they knew the end was very near."

"One way bastard."

None of us said anything for a few minutes.

"I'm as tired as if I'd been working double shifts in the mine," Luke finally said. "You know what I thought about in there? My Grandma."

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"Your Grandma?"

"Sure. You remember I tole ya bout Grandma. How I used to go over to help her all the time because I was the biggest and there was so many of us and she was all alone and so small and old. I tole you about her whupping me for gettin' into her snuff that time. Well, I been laying in there thinking about Grandma and you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to fix her up." Luke grinned just thinking about it. "Whenever anything went wrong, Grandma'd always say, 'That's the way it goes, chicken one day feathers the next.' I'm going to stock her place with a thousand chickens and every time Grandma says that, I'm going to throw a rooster onto the block, and chop its head off and fling it in the pot. Grandma'll throw a fit."

"You'll be the hit of the Ozarks, Luke." Jones said. "It doesn't make any difference what Mr. Madison said about us not wanting to see each other, I'm coming down there to meet her."

"I'm as tired as I can be," Zack said. "It's all I can do to stand here."

"Me, too," the rest agreed.

"I think I will take a bath and try to nap. It'll be heaven to stretch out without Jones's feet in my face." But they didn't go right then. They sat in the sunshine, I think because they were too exhausted to move. I heard Joe move in his cell and went in to help him and to report to him. When I came out again they were all gone. I returned to Joe's cell. I sat there. Neither of us said anything for a long time. He didn't open his eyes. "We slipped over that wall quickly and easily, just the way we'd planned it. We ran silently along the guards' path to the bridge and ducked down under it to wait for Crashdive to make another round. After he made another round, we crawled up, crossed the bridge and walked right down the road past the *denki* shop where we draw our miners' lights.

"It was easy. I seemed to be bursting with energy. I think we all were. I suppose it was because we were finally doing something no one had ordered. About two miles down the road we cut off toward the foot of that highest mountain and began to climb it. It was so steep, almost straight up. We were all exhausted in a few minutes but we kept crawling up. By the time we reached the top, dawn was near. We sprawled to rest.

"The bugles woke us. At first we thought it was Warui's bugle echoing through the valleys. Then we realized that there were little camps scattered in all the valleys. We tried to find a way off the mountain but as soon as we had gone a little way in one direction we would recognize another camp.

"We went back to the mountain top to watch the sun come up. It was lovely. For a little while.

"When it was light enough to see into the valleys, we knew we had had it. All the slopes were covered with Japs. Long lines at the bases beat the bushes and converged toward the mountain tops. We couldn't see them, but we knew they were coming up our mountain, too.

"We just sat there and waited. There was no place to go, no place to hide.

"Zack tossed that package of cigarettes Kato had given him from one hand to the other. There wasn't a match among the five of us.

"The line of bush-beaters reaching our mountain finally came in view. When they saw us, they drew into a tight circle about forty feet away from us and waited, staring at us. Finally, Cowboy reached the line and took a few steps forward. Scott called out to him and Cowboy came closer. Scott asked him for a match and Cowboy threw him a box. We lit up Zack's cigarettes.

"We knew why the searchers had waited. Crashdive was in charge of this group. He scrambled up the mountain and joined the ring.

"The cigarettes exhilarated us at the same time they must have relaxed our tensions. Taking a few steps toward Cowboy, Scott slapped his hips, simulated a quick draw and cocked his thumbs, 'Tom Mix, Tom Mix.'

"Cowboy slowly put his hands on his hips then pretended to throw his six-shooters on the ground. He said, 'This is not a happy Cowboy.'

"Then Crashdive hit him and sent him back to the line.

"I stood up and walked toward Crashdive. When he got close enough, he swung his rifle butt. I tried to dodge but he caught me in the balls. I couldn't even get up. I could only lie there while he kicked me until I passed out."

Joe gave a mighty sigh.

"Jones may be right. There is no action. There is only re-action. And re-action destroys. Could Jones be right? Perhaps the only real strength is in consciously refusing to re-act to every force that hits a man."

When he stopped talking, Joe seemed to go to sleep. I went to sit on the doorstep and listened to John Morton Grace sing.

When the planes came, I was still sitting there.

We went mad, shouting at them and screaming greetings. They were fighter planes off an American carrier. We lined the wall and screamed until they were dots disappearing over the hill. The yard buzzed with new life for the next two hours. It was just after our friends had taken their baths and returned to sit with me by the cell that Colonel Holm posted his order.

Bill Trona brought it out and tacked it up. He put a copy by the kitchen and a copy near the barracks door. We watched men pause to read it then curse or walk away with long faces. Jones went over to get the message for us. After reading it, he tore it from the wall, strode back across the yard and thrust it under my nose. "This command will fall out for troop and drill at 1300!" he said calmly. Then spat out, "You get that bastard Holm put in the cell next to John Grace. He's as crazy as a bedbug!"

"Sergeant Jones!" Colonel Holm marched across the yard.

"Yes?"

"Did you remove that post order?"

"I did."

"Why?"

"Why! Because it's insane. We just came out of the

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coalmine or *eso*, Colonel, not a recruiting office." Jones shook all over with his rage. "I think you've lost your marbles, Colonel."

"Insolence! Insubordination! Court Martial!" Colonel Holm sputtered.

Jones tore the notice, slowly, first one way, then put the pieces together and tore them again and again and they fluttered to the ground. "Sergeant Jones, pick them up."

"You, Sir, can kiss my ass!"

Colonel Holm turned on his heel and went into the guardhouse shouting, "Sergeant of the guard!"

It was at that moment that the planes returned, twelve of them. Again we lined the walls. They started performing for us and coming in so low that the pilots seemed to be closer to the floor of the valley than we were atop our slag heap. Then they formed a huge circle overhead, peeled off one by one and swooped low beside our slag heap to drop food and supplies to us. One after another they swarmed until all of them again circled overhead, then they swooped into formation, bobbed their noses at us and flew over the mountains.

Except for those men just out of *eso*, men covered the side of the mountain like ants retrieving the seabags and mattress covers filled with food, wading the shallow creek at the bottom of the slag heap which separated us from the mountainside. When the last man returned and dumped his load at Holm's feet, he said, "There's another seabag half-hidden. Somebody get it."

Carey and Lucas started.

"Just a minute," Holm said. "Let's let some of the men who haven't done their share retrieve it. You and you," he pointed to Jones and Luke, "go get it."

"I'd just as soon," I said. "These men . . ."

"I'll give the orders, Lt.," he said.

Jones and Luke went out the little gate by the galley, the gate we used to carry garbage down to the creek. I went with them to the gate to sight the seabag in the creek. As soon as they spotted it, they plunged down the slope and began to tug it out of the water. Then we heard the laggard plane coming in, swooping right up the valley toward us. "Come back," I screamed. I saw them look quickly toward the plane, then begin to tug at the bag with renewed vigor. It came loose and they started up the path with it. Zack and Scott appeared at my elbow, started down the path, then came back. The plane roared on.

"Drop the bag," I screamed but my voice was lost in the roar of the plane.

Suddenly, they did drop it. Jones ran up the path. He looked over his shoulder, saw Luke's pantleg caught on the snap of the bag and ran back to help him disentangle it. The plane roared over. I heard the thump of its drop and opened my eyes. First I saw Scott standing beside me. His eyes were wide open and he was tearing the flesh out of his legs with long slow drags of his fingernails. Then I followed his gaze and saw Luke and Jones smashed beneath the quarter of frozen beef which had plunged on them from the belly of the mercy plane.

Books

TO CONFRONT THE FILMS

I Lost It at the Movies. Pauline Kael. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965. 365 pp. $6.00.

In this extraordinary collection of opinions by one of America's leading voices on the film, it might be said that the reviewer is tempted to offer a total impression on the basis of fragments of opinion. One turns to the sacred few. What does she say of *Jules et Jim*? She ends five pages of praise with "the most exciting movie made in the West since *L'Avventura* and *Breathless* . . .; because of the beauty and warmth of its images, it is a richer, a more satisfying film than any of them. I think it will rank among the great lyric achievements of the screen. . . ." Good, we agree. And so, the reviewer can search through the seventeen page index of films and people until he reaches the point of no agreement. Four pages on *Hiroshima Mon Amour* and we have reached our impasse. And we recall the numerous times we have waved a cocktail glass and disputed the fundamental aspects of a film without moving an inch or coming to any agreement. For, with the film, unlike the theatre or music or painting or the novel or poetry, one rarely changes one's mind. The initial impact is far too powerful. It is difficult to learn to like *Last Year at Marienbad* if one is predisposed not to like it and each viewing simply adds to the reasons that one may have for despising it. It is somewhat like the bigot who is told to learn a foreign language in order to understand a people better and who, upon returning from the foreign shore reports that he never did like those people and now that he knows their language, he knows why. There is an immediate and personal response to the film that can not be compared to any of the other art forms. Endless sessions on the history of the film, courses on technique, discussions with experts and even constant viewing of the great films may move us or enlighten us but the initial feelings, however prejudiced, always remain.

Pauline Kael is an extremely opinionated woman and reviewer. And this is to be considered a compliment. If you have ever heard her speak or if you have read her perceptive reviews, you can not fail to recognize her willingness to express her views whether she be one of hundreds shouting acclaim or only one voicing disapproval. There is one area of disagreement that I have with her point of view and this has to do with her unwillingness to recognize her own prejudices and her desire to rationalize her personal taste by some complex and artificial objectivity. She usually expresses very strong feelings about important films. She detested *He Who Must Die,* she dislikes the socially conscious problem pictures of the Stanley Kramer variety, and she devotes twenty seven pages to an impassioned denunciation of "morality plays Right and Left." Yet she is unwilling to recognize the fact that her long unconvincing commentary on *Salt of the Earth* has little to do with its merit as a documentary. The fine line between social and artistic critcism is never clear, but the critic

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should recognize the extremes of the one from the extremes of the other. If *Salt of the Earth* is pure propaganda and poorly done as a documentary, this is one thing, but whether the Marxist concept of the common man has meaning in modern society is an entirely different question. The critic, of course, can reflect any bias he wishes, but he should recognize these prejudices for what they are.

Even when I do not agree with Miss Kael, I find her ideas provocative and challenging. I highly recommend her book to all who find interest in the film as a twentieth century medium and who wish to relive the excitement of the pictures that have made profound impressions on them over the years. However caustic and narrow she may seem at times, Miss Kael brings these films to life with all the knowledge and awareness that has long been her trademark.

Walter Borenstein

IS HE WORTH ALL THE TROUBLE?

Dog Years. Günter Grass, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1965. 570 pp. $6.95.

Günter Grass's third novel, *Dog Years,* follows in a long tradition of books that can not easily be reviewed.

This exhausting novel of one of Germany's leading contemporary authors belongs to this tradition. Enough serious readers have questioned the importance of his work to force us to face the inevitable question: "Is he worth all the trouble?" Enough serious critics have praised his work as the most meaningful to come from Germany in twenty-five years to force us to assume that a quick modern popular-novel-type of reading will not prove the point of either side. It is soon obvious to the reader that this is a novel to be studied rather than read, for it is in the minute detail and in the labored creation of words and phrases that Grass has achieved his greatest success. He brings into literature many of the techniques of painting and the plastic arts and it is in the finer, less obvious details of the work that we must search for the broader meaning. Grass's use of northern Baltic dialect, his use of words, phrases and concepts that dominated German life and philosophical thinking for two decades and more, his building of words to create grotesque sensory impressions, all of this is not only an almost insurmountable barrier to the translator, but also a tedious and laborious challenge to the ordinary reader.

Dog Years is divided into three major sections and each section is seen through the voice and mind of a different character. Herr Brauxel, owner of the mine, narrates the early years of the two major characters, Eduard Amsel and Walter Matern. He does this in thirty-three "Morning Shifts." The importance of this most magic of numbers is obvious to anyone searching for the magic number of the Nazi movement. The second section is a depiction of Germany through the Hitler years as seen through the letters of Harry Liebenau to his cousin Tulla. The final portion, to my mind the best section of the novel, deals with the post-war years and is narrated by Walter Matern in a Hundred and Three Materniads and describes the vengeance of Matern on the guilty perpetrators of Nazi outrages.

It is difficult to try to find either the thread of the narrative of this novel or its essential meaning. His concept of Christian, Nazi and Jew in a Germany gone mad is simply beyond the scope of the reader who has picked up a volume to fill an empty evening. For these individuals Grass will be a bore and they will wonder what others can see in his work. For those who are willing to search in the mass of detailed material, the novel will offer an unbelievable and rich source of understanding and meaning.

Walter Borenstein

HAUNTING MEMORY

The Orchard Keeper. Cormac McCarthy. New York, Random House, 1965. 246 pp. $4.95.

This is an irritating book: its plot is so complex it can be touched only lightly in a review; its characters, seen only from without, never come really alive; its style is imitative, with sentences full of pronouns without antecedents, abstruse words, veiled hints, and deliberately withheld information.

It is a confusing book: it consists of a series of disconnected episodes; although the flashback device is used frequently, time and place remain obscure.

But it is an impressive book. With remarkable artistry, the author creates a succession of dramatic scenes against the poetically described background of his native Tennessee hill country. The influence of this natural environment upon the characters is effectively delineated; they live just outside the clutches of modern "civilization" and just beyond the pale of law, accepting without question the results of their own actions.

Because the author is concerned with only what the characters do, not with what they think or feel, the reader cannot identify with them. Indeed, at times it seems that the protagonist of the novel is the countryside itself, so sensitively is it described, so familiar does it become.

From the dramatically powerful but disjointed episodes there evolves a loosely woven plot around three people: a young boy, an old man, and a young "rum runner." However, their lives, and what happens to them are secondary in importance. What remains with the reader is the haunting memory of the East Tennessee hills, and an admiration for the author's way with words.

Mary Byerly

NOTES OF INFINITE SWEETNESS

Waltz and Other Stories. Felix Marti-Ibañez. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1965. 309 pp. $5.00.

To open this collection of tales is to return to past centuries and a world of enchantment and romantic mystery that is so reminiscent of such late nineteenth century writers as Guy de Maupassant and Emilia Pardo Bazán that the reader is soon overcome by the illusion that he is reading a translation from the French or the Spanish of the past century. Marti-Ibañez writes in the same narrative tradition as the medieval and Renaissance tellers of tales. If were to add to this medieval *conte* a touch of O. Henry and the surprise

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ending, a preference for the Spanish sense of honor and Italian vengeance, we would have a rather clear idea of what to expect in his stories.

The most unusual story of the group is *Dateline: Munich*. It takes place in Germany in 1947 and tells the story of one of Adolf Hitler's many doubles. This man, now insane, is brought back before the public by a small group of anti-Nazis with the story that he is really Hitler and that it was the double who died in the bunker in Berlin. The double is brought to a public meeting and is mistaken for Hitler and murdered by the mob. The double's brother eventually explains the purpose of it all. "Hitler the man was dead, but Hitler the myth remained. The myth had to be destroyed. . . . If the German people themselves didn't kill Hitler, he would live forever in their hearts as a martyr."

It can be said that literary styles have their time. Marti-Ibañez has picked up a thread that ran out with the nineteenth century. The stories seem trite, melodramatic, naive and absurd at times to the modern audience. The author lacks the ability of a number of European short story writers, like Isak Dinesen, to bring the medieval tale to life in a modern form. There is something old-fashioned in the author's style and fictional world that makes it impossible to take him seriously. The atmosphere is often quite typical of late nineteenth century Spain and its literary style as in "soft distant notes floated in through the window, notes of infinite sweetness and nostalgia, as though the night itself were playing its mysteries on an invisible piano." Wistful nostalgia and romantic mystery forcefully imposed on a false world are not at all effective. The flowers in the delicately formed porcelain vase remain artificial.

Walter Borenstein

THE HIGH AND DESOLATE ROAD

Yes From No Man's Land. Bernard Kops. New York, Coward-McCann, Inc., 1965. 207 pp. $4.50.

In his autobiographical novel *The World Is A Wedding,* Bernard Kops says it is the Jewish mother who holds the family together. But the destruction of the family was not absolute. In this, his second novel—less frankly autobiographical—the old Jewish father, Joe Levine, is dying in a Catholic hospital in London.

As they might in a play, the characters in the novel gather in the hospital ward. There is Sophie, the fat, plaintively faithful daughter, who knows that "this little man noshing away at his double cream cheese sandwich held the life and death of the family within his own grasp and when that heart stopped and when that grip slackened they would all go their own sweet ways." There is Barry, with his fiancee Susan, a *shikse* with more compassion and understanding than he had bargained for. And there are the old man's second wife, Tilly, the "colossal woman" who smells of fish and fish-oil and vinegary cabbage, who makes Sophie look like a sylph, and an old friend of Joe's, Harry Bloom. Smiling nuns hover in the background of the drama . . . the past is resurrected by the old man, his son, and his daughter.

Yes From No Man's Land is a strong book. Its author has taken the high and desolate road that turns off from the heavy traffic in spoofs, stylistic posturings, and bedroom gymnastics. After love-making, the universe begins to seep into his room . . . he is aware of its coldness, of man's essential loneliness; of the anguish in the bonds between parents and children ("these threads that ensnared"); of man's hunger for a sense of purpose in his life. Highly recommended.

A. Farrell Borenstein

CLOUDLAND RE-VISITED

Stockade. Jack Pearl. New York: Trident Press, 1965. 373 pp. $4.95.

Stockade is a first novel by a man who has written biography, juvenile books, magazine articles, and worked as a magazine editor, had a fling at advertising and television, and edited copy and scripts. Through these years of apprenticeship Jack Pearl has learned the "rules of the game." He has drawn heavily from what has been most successful and popular in movies, television and the novel to write this composite work that keeps reminding the reader of scenes or pages seen or read here and there. He offers a little of everything for all possible tastes. We have the cruel, almost barbaric situation of the stockade, the prejudice and mistreatment involving the Negro soldiers in the novel, the sadistic and perverted Lieutenant Black and his alcoholic and insatiable sister Madeline. Midway in the novel, the horror and inhumanity of man to his fellow man culminate in the shooting of Lieutenant Black by one of the soldiers on guard duty as the officer commands Ed Remington, the guard, to shoot down the Negro prisoner Soames White because he had stepped from a small circle marked out for him by his tormentor. In the last moments of this scene, Ed Remington "had a very clear impression of Lieutenant Black's dark glasses pulverizing into infinite fragments as the double blast decapitated him."

The second portion of the book is essentially the round-by-round depiction of a court-martial. Here, following the standards set by such stalwarts of television as Perry Mason and such novels as *Eternal Fire* or *Anatomy of a Murder,* or a play like *The Caine Mutiny,* Pearl uses every trick, every device of melodrama and suspense to bring us to the inevitable failure of Ed Remington's Jewish lawyer, Larry Kass, and the victory of the narrow concepts of military justice. To the army prosecutor, Major Markey, a man "was no more complicated or unpredictable than an M-1 rifle. The Army was a colossal machine composed of assembly-line parts. . . . If one component malfunctioned, you simply replaced it with all possible dispatch and disposed of the faulty part." Before Ed Remington can be punished for his crime against the Army, he tries to escape and is killed by his guards. And in the end Remington had changed from an indifferent and correct soldier, blindly accepting the Army's every dictum into a thinking man, into an individual. "You talk of the creeping cancer that produced Hitler and Stalin. The chronic disease of indifference. The classic crime

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of the ages, the crime of the people. Think of the millions who have paid with their lives for that crime. . . ." And at the very end, life goes on. Larry Kass sits in the Someplace Else Cafe with Barbara, who had gone through violence and tragedy to find herself. A voice in the bar of this cafe in the south listens to a church bell tolling and curses, threatening to burn down that nigger church some day. And hero and heroine walk out into the clean, cool night air.

Stockade is a novel of clichés, of stock parts and rote speeches. It is a book in which the social message is lost in the characters and their relationships, because black (Lieutenant Black) and white (Soames White) are frankly too black and too white. The lieutenant is a homosexual hiding behind army swagger and led into an absurd involvement with a young recruit. His sister is too debauched, Sergeant Hamish is too much like the sergeant in the guardhouse, Fatso, in *From Here to Eternity*. In spite of all its defects, in spite of its lack of originality, it is an interesting book to read. It has all the earmarks of a mystery thriller. And we forgive this because there is no pretense to higher values. It has exactly what its author knows Hollywood wants in a popular movie. We can already start trying to cast Burt Lancaster. If this is all Mr. Pearl is trying to say, he has done well. As for a higher purpose, we can only hope that the needs of the "late show" will not require this.

Walter Borenstein

THE WHOLE MELANCHOLY LOT

Michael Joe. William Cotter Murray. New York, Appleton-Century, 1965. 336 pp. $5.95.

Young, handsome Michael Joe, with a good measure of bravado, leads the unexamined life that is the legacy of Ireland to its loyal sons. He runs the shop his father left him, and lives with his widowed mother. After a day in the shop, a look at the newspaper, and an exchange of gossip, he plays billiards or cards, and has a few drinks with his cronies. When he attends the dances at Parochial Hall, he never makes "the mistake of thinking a dance with a girl was an end in itself." He cultivates an approach—"a mixture of all-conquering Casanova and the contempt of Iago."

Romancing tall, spirited Nell Cullen, Michael Joe buys an expensive necklace for her Christmas gift. His mother tells him: "You're making a fool of yourself with your gifts of gold. . . She had a brat by a fellow in England. And came home because she lost her job." Bewildered, furious, wounded in his pride, Michael Joe tells Nell, "You made a disgrace of me. . . . Parading as a lily-white." A true man, a man's man, could never accept "tainted goods." After Nell is married to one of his friends, Michael Joe takes Ann Shanahan, a shy, devout country girl, for a wife. "And so his life began to settle into routine, the routine of a substantial citizen respectable and married, with horse racing as his one aberration and passion."

In his house—still his mother's house—the women knit and clean and tell their beads. And in the shop, the bachelors come to him to borrow a few bob, to tell him their troubles, and to listen to his yarns and his advice. A son is born—but he belongs to his mother, and his grandmother, and the Church. "When the son and the father were sinners," Michael Joe reasons, "then they could talk." But whatever sinning Michael Joe did, he did alone. Ann, ever shamed by her husband's need of her, withdraws into hypochondria, religious devotions, and the company of old women, as did her mother-in-law before her. And in the end, Michael Joe kneels to receive a blessing from his newly ordained son, knowing no more of love and life in middle age than he had known as a youth.

In his first novel, which won for him the Meredith-Iowa Writer's Award, William Cotter Murray describes Irish life with dispassionate clarity. It is all there—the war between man and woman; the carping, jealous mother; the fear of loss of face and masculine honor with the cronies in the pub; the old priest in the wide hat, shaking his stick at the lovers from across the stream, shouting, "Sinners! Ye pack of sinners! Violating the Sixth Commandment!"; the narrowing life, in which sex is sin, and the love between man and woman represents the woman's fall from grace and the man's loss of reputation with the fellows—the whole melancholy lot. The tale unfolds, told coolly, with precision, by a writer whose command of his gift is impressive.

A. Farrell Borenstein

A DUSTY ANSWER

The Battle of El Alamein. Fred Majdalany. J. B. Lippincott Co., Phila., 1965. 168pp. $4.50

This is a good book which describes precisely what the title implies: the Battle of El Alamein during the North African campaign of WW II. After a short introductory chapter outlining the unique qualities of desert warfare, chapters detail events leading up to the battle. The remainder deals with the participants, circumstances, strategy, tactics, conflict itself and the results. Majdalany does a fine job of developing detail into a coherent whole.

It has one flaw. Twenty years after such an event, one expects equivalent descriptions of the opponents.

Well written, worth the general reader's time.

William A. Stoppel

CONTENT OVER FORM

Voices of a Summer Day. Irwin Shaw. New York. Dial Press, 1965. 223 pp. $4.95.

The voices of a summer day heard by Benjamin Federov are memories from his distant and not-too-distant past. The highlights of his life recurring to him as he watches a baseball game involve his relations with various friends and relatives—father, brother, wife, camp counselor, mistresses, and so forth. It is in depicting these relations that Shaw is at his best. He is at somewhat less than his best in uniting the depictions. The incidents of *Voices of a Summer Day* have insufficient plot, unity, or conflict to be related chronologically; the reminiscence structure Shaw chose to link the incidents veils only thinly the fact that they are unrelated and lead nowhere. For instance, in a set of remi-

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niscences Shaw reveals the unhappiness of Benjamin's marriage, his reasons for taking a mistress, his reasons for not marrying the mistress, and even his love for his wife. His marital conflict is not examined or developed in following scenes, however, and in the closing chapters of the novel the reader is still confronted with Benjamin's vague feelings of love for, but unhappiness with, his wife and life.

In the last chapter, Shaw attempts to link the incidents by developing Benjamin's moral judgements on the people involved in them and his resolvement of the injustices of life. Ben's summary is interestingly moral but fails to connect the flashbacks sufficiently. If one can overlook the disunited structure, *Voices of a Summer Day* will provide an absorbing and gratifying afternoon's reading for any who prefer the pre-Jamesian novel emphasizing content over form.

Madge Kistner

REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST

The Greatest Thing Since Sliced Bread, Don Robertson. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1965. 256 pp. $4.50.

Morris Bird III is the nine-year-old hero of this novel set in Cleveland, Ohio in 1944. Morris lives with his mother, who sleeps and does her bit for national defense by being a secretary at a bolt factory to "earn the little Extra"; his father, a radio announcer whom Morris thinks of as "The Voice of Cleveland and Northeastern Ohio"; his young grandmother; and his six-year-old sister Sandra, who bawls all the time.

Morris loves Veronica Lake and the girl next door in that order. He plays ball well, has a "bright mind," and plays with his freak friend Stanley Chaloupka's basement full of trains. June Weed, babysitter and a "filthy oar," plays a role as do various neighbors, teachers, classmates, and total strangers.

Morris Bird III is an engaging character. He wrestles with an ethical and moral problem. His solution is the plot and causes him to be called "The greatest thing since sliced bread."

Author Robertson does an excellent job in what he sets out to do. This novel will never replace Tom Sawyer. It was not intended to do so. It will probably never even be made into a movie; however, if you lived through the thirties, you will enjoy the topical references and Morris Bird as much as I did. If you did not, you will probably zip through it and laugh for other reasons as did my two teenage daughters. Recommended.

Bernard E. Richardson

POTPOURRI

Not For Publication And Other Stories, Nadine Gordimer. Viking, New York, 1965. 248 pp. $4.95.

These sixteen stories are similar and yet all different. They are about people and that makes them different because people are. Nadine Gordimer writes again of South Africans—natives, whites and Indians. Each story is a unit. But taken together, the units do not make a whole. It is clearly not Miss Gordimer's intention to weave a complete fabric, each mosaic joined to another. She captures bits of life but suggests pasts and futures, meetings and partings, affects and effects, fluidity. My favorite story is *A Chip of Glass Ruby* about an Indian widower who married "the ugly widow with five children" who are joined by his own four in her house. Only after she has been some months in prison does he come to understand why he needed her without understanding her. Recommended to all who read short stories.

A Sitter For A Satyr, George Andrzeyevski. Dutton, New York, 1965. 190 pp. $3.95.

"An irreverent, witty, and sophisticated story of a great modern painter, . . ." ". . . author is amazingly skillful in his use of satire and parody," runs the jacket blurb. Perhaps that is what ruined the novel for me: the satire on lives not even worth a joke, not important enough to bear the weight of satire; the wit strained; the parody too derivative. But, then, I probably read it on a bad day. Your best bet is to give it a try yourself.

The Boarding House, William Trevor. Viking Press, New York, 1965. 287 pp. $4.50.

Quite by accident, William Wagner Bird acquired a boarding house, deliberately filled it with personally selected failures as human beings, and then, "I am going out feet first," said Mr. Bird, a wit to the end. "My legs have entered their eternal rest. Nurse Clock, I would have you record that and pass it on to a daily newspaper." Thus dies Mr. Landlord Bird on the first page of *The Boarding House*.

A manipulator of others in life, Mr. Bird continues to influence the lives of his boarders after his death. He creates a bubbling cauldron by leaving the house to the two boarders who most detest each other: Nurse Clock who failed to notify the newspapers of Mr. Bird's feet-first departure and Mr. Studdy who exists by penny-ante confidence games, blackmail and swindling bartenders out of bits of change.

According to the will, continued ownership of the house by Nurse Clock and Mr. Studdy hinged upon their maintenance of the house and occupants exactly as it was in Mr. Bird's time. The co-owners promptly ride herd on their loathing for each other to join forces in an effort to rid the house of its boarders and turn it into a home for old people on their last beds. The boarders include: Major Eele who is a travesty of the military in senility; Scribbin, a giant who plays records of locomotive engines in his room; Rose Cave, an elderly virgin whose life centers about the fact that she is a bastard; an African student stranded in London for years because he flunked his law study and now pursues a girl who has pretended to be "not at home" to him for the past twelve years; Venables of the weak stomach and weaker mind; clerical Miss Clerricott doomed to die unmolested; and two domestics.

With incisive, deft characterization, William Trevor has created a chuckling-funny novel. Recommended in spite of the slipshod ending.

Armarius

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